

Birth Choices

Planning for your labor and birth

Share your ideas and concerns about your birth and hospital stay with your healthcare provider. Bring your requests to a prenatal clinic visit so that we know what is most important to you. Remember to be flexible – you cannot predict what your labor will be like.

Clinic staff are responsible for the safety of you and your baby. We want to fulfill your requests and help you have a positive birth experience.

Let Us Know What Is Important to You

Please tell us what is most important to you during labor and birth. The staff will try to provide what you ask for.

Our first priority is the safe care of you and your baby. Also, think about how you may feel and what you may prefer if an unexpected event occurs.

Some families have special cultural or traditional practices that are important during and after a birth. Please tell us how we can provide what is important to you.



Please tell us what is most important to you during labor and birth. We want to help you have a positive birth experience.

Knowing what your choices are for labor and birth helps you understand what may occur. It also helps you make informed decisions about your care and the care of your baby. We want you to be a partner in your care.

Your Choices

Here are some choices you will need to make during and after labor:

Ways to Cope with Labor Pain

- Relaxation and breathing
- Frequent position changes
- Massage
- Focal points (what you want to focus on)
- Music
- Bath or shower
- Hot or cold packs
- Medicines, such as *epidural anesthesia*, as labor progresses

During Labor and Birth

- Walking with a fetal monitor on or possibly having *intermittent* (off and on) fetal monitoring
- Special positions for the birth like:
 - On your hands and knees
 - Squatting while pushing
 - Other
- Watching the birth in a mirror
- Turning the lights down or playing special music

After Your Baby Is Born

- Asking to cut the umbilical cord
- Asking for your baby to be placed on your belly (skin-to-skin) after birth
- Asking for your baby to be dried and swaddled before being placed in your arms
- Cord blood donation

For information on taking photographs and videotaping, see the chapter “Birth and Labor Photos, Videos, and Audio Recordings” in this book.

Meals

Please let our staff know if you have special dietary needs. These might include food allergies or special food requests such as diabetic, vegetarian or vegan, kosher, low fat, or others.



Normal newborn care includes a bath and cord care.

Care Your Newborn Will Receive

- Checks of baby's temperature, heart rate, and breathing
- Eye ointment in the first hour
- Vitamin K injection for blood clotting in the first hour
- Possible blood sugar checks if you are diabetic or your baby is large or small
- Weight and length measurement
- Bath and cord care
- Hepatitis B immunization
- Hearing screening is done to check your baby's hearing

Feeding Your Baby

- Breastfeeding
- Pumping

Ask to talk with a lactation consultant if you would like help with breastfeeding.

Your Birth Plan

Please see the next page for a sample birth plan. This is just an example – be sure that the choices you make are right for you.

When you are ready, you may complete “My Birth Plan” on pages 49 and 50 of this book to create a birth plan of your own.

A Sample Birth Plan

My Birth Plan

- This is our first baby. The due date is January 1.
- My OB is **Dr. Sally Smith**.
- My support people will be **my husband John and a doula**.

We ask to labor and deliver in an atmosphere that promotes **relaxation, movement**, and **birth's natural progression**. This is our ideal birth.

Labor Preferences: I want to:

- Wear my own clothing
- Have lights dimmed
- Take a shower or sit in a whirlpool, have massage and soft music
- Move freely and be able to walk around
- Use a birth ball

Controlling Pain: I want to use natural coping methods (breathing, focused relaxation, comfort positions, tub) to control pain in early labor. I expect I will want an epidural as labor progresses. Please do not offer pain relief medicines. We will ask for them if we decide we want them.

Interventions: We trust that if any interventions or medicines are needed, you will talk with us about their risks and benefits, and other options we have.

- My husband John will be my advocate during labor.

Breastfeeding: I will breastfeed our baby. Please do **not** give my baby supplements. If our baby needs urgent care, we ask that John be with the baby at all times.

- I want to talk with a lactation consultant.

Newborn Care: I would like to hold our baby right after birth. Please wait as long as possible for the vitamin K shot, eye ointment, and bath. Please check all vital signs while our baby is on my chest.

- John will cut the umbilical cord.
- We plan to donate the cord blood.
- We want our parents to come into the labor room after our baby is born.

Thank you for helping us work toward our ideal birth.

Questions?

Your questions are important. If you have questions about your birth plan, call your healthcare provider during office hours.