



YOUR BETTER BIRTH

You can never really plan your birth. How it plays out - when labour starts, how fast it goes, etc. is not in our control. So why create a birth plan? To educate yourself around the choices you DO have during your birth, and to let your birth team know exactly what you need in order to feel supported and taken care of.

Creating a personal birth plan will prepare you for your birth, allow you to become familiar with the pros and cons of each option available to you and help you create the best possible birth experience for you and your baby.

Your birth plan should be less than a page; that is not a lot of room so be sure to note what is most important to you and your family. Go over your birth plan with your care provider at around 36 weeks or earlier, and have several copies made for the day of your birth.

The following are some of the options you might consider when working on your birth plan. Once you've researched/reflected on your choices, you can size it down to your priorities. If you don't understand some of the options mentioned, then it is a good idea to do more research, take a childbirth class, and talk with your health care provider.

During labor would you like:

To bring music?

To dim the lights?

To wear your own clothing?

To take pictures and film the birth?

What else would help you feel comfortable in your labour room?

How would you like labor to begin?

Would you like labour to start naturally, even if you go "post dates"?

Are you comfortable with the idea of induction, how do you feel about:

- Stripping Membranes/Membrane Sweep?
- Prostaglandin Gels?
- Foley Balloon/Catheter?
- Pitocin?

Once you are in labour would you like:

To labour at home as long as possible?

The option to return home if you are not in active labour when arriving at the hospital?

Once you are admitted to the Hospital (if choosing a hospital birth):

How would you feel about an IV or a Saline Lock?

Have you ever had an IV before?

Do you feel like you will be able to stay hydrated and nourished by eating and drinking?

Who do you want with you in your labour room?

Your partner?

A parent?

A doula?

Are you comfortable with having medical staff and residents in attendance?

Do you wish to have freedom to move and walk as you choose?

As long as you and the baby are doing fine, would you like:

To monitor the baby's heart rate intermittently (every 15-20 mins)?

To use a Continuous Electronic Fetal Monitor?

To use the a wireless heart rate monitor that are waterproof (telemetry unit)?

To refuse the use of Internal Heart Rate Monitors unless medically necessary?

To allow labour to move at it's own pace, free of stringent time limits?

Limit unnecessary cervical checks?

For any discomfort during the first stage of labour (dilation) would you like to try:

Changing Positions?

- Walking
- Standing
- Hands & Knees
- Sitting
- Squatting

Equipment?

- Birthing Ball (exercise ball)
- Peanut Ball
- Birthing Bar
- Birthing Tub

Non-medical Comfort Techniques?

- Acupressure
- Bath/Shower
- Breathing Techniques/Distracton
- Self Hypnosis
- Massage
- Hot/Cold Therapy (Ice, Hot Packs)
- TENS machine
- Double Hip Squeezes/Counter Pressure

What are some other coping techniques you may have used in your life that you can bring into your birth? What do you do when you're feeling sick, have a cold, or are under stress?

How do you feel about the use of Pain Relief Medication during your birth?

Do you want to have a natural birth?

Would you like your caregivers to let you know when a good time to use medication would be? or would you prefer to ask for it, only when/if you feel like you need it?

Do you have a goal of 4cm dilation or more before the use of Pain Relief Medication?

If you are comfortable with the use of medication would you prefer?

- Regional Analgesia (an epidural and/or spinal block)
- Systemic Medication (nitrous oxide and/or Demerol)

What if labour slows or stalls?

Would you like to try natural means to speed it up, such as walking, eating, changing positions?

How do you feel about breaking waters as a means to speed labour up?

What about medication such as Pitocin?

How do you think you would feel if labour began to slow down? How long or short would you like your labour to be?

During The Second Stage of Labour (“pushing”) would you like to try different positions, such as:

- Semi Reclining?
- Side Lying?
- Squatting?
- Hands and knees?
- What ever feels right at the time?

When it is time to push would you like:

- To do so instinctively, bearing down when your body gives you the “urge to push”?
- To be coached on when to push and for how long?
- To be reminded to change positions if pushing is slow or not progressing?

During the birth would you like:

- To view the birth with a mirror?
- To touch your baby’s head as it crowns?
- To have a warm compress on your perineum to reduce tearing?
- For the room to be as quiet as possible?
- To risk a tear or birth over an intact perineum rather than an episiotomy?
- Your partner to help catch the baby?

If you have a Cesarean/Surgical Birth would you like:

- Your partner with you at all times, even during administration of the spinal block?
- Your doula to remain with you during the birth for support and information?
- To have the screen lowered a bit so you can see the birth of your baby?
- To have delayed cord clamping?
- To take pictures of your birth?
- Your partner or yourself to hold the baby skin to skin after the birth?
- To breast/chestfeed your baby in the recovery room?

If a Cesarean/Surgical Birth became necessary, how would you feel?

What could you do to ensure that this birth is still a positive experience?
