

# How to write a birth plan



- 1. Name and information about you and your partner** (Are there any special needs?) and any support persons (e.g., a doula or family member). What languages do you speak, and in which language would you like to receive information?
- 2. Expectations and Preparations:** How has your pregnancy been for you? What are you most looking forward to about the birth? Is there anything that might trigger anxiety or discomfort for you? How have you prepared for birth?
- 3. Medical Information:** Are there any medical needs to consider? Examples: Group B strep, genital herpes, Rh incompatibility, gestational diabetes, fear of needles or blood (including for your partner), previous birth trauma, or experience of abuse.
- 4. Desired Birth Experience:** What type of birth are you aiming for? Vaginal birth, C-section, water birth, VBAC (vaginal birth after cesarean).
- 5. Pain Relief Preferences:** What pain relief methods are you interested in or not interested in? Examples: acupressure, acupuncture, breathing techniques, heat, bath, affirmations & visualizations, hypnobirthing, massage, meditation, sterile water injections, TENS machine, epidural, laughing gas, or no pain relief at all. It may also be helpful to mention if you want to be asked about trying different pain relief options by the staff or if you prefer to request them yourself.
- 6. Birth Room Vibes:** What should the birth space feel like? Examples: music or silence, dim lighting, essential oils, as few disturbances as possible, minimal examinations, clear communication and information, extra support, mattress/pilates ball/birth stool available, dance party...
- 7. Birth Process:**
  - a. Preferred birthing positions: Examples: squatting, side-lying, on hands and knees, in the bath, on a pilates ball, on a birth stool.
  - b. Fetal monitoring preferences: (e.g., continuous, intermittent, only with a Doppler when necessary).
  - c. Preferences regarding IV access on the hand.
  - d. How would you like the umbilical cord to be handled? (e.g., delayed cord clamping, who cuts it, blood sample?).
  - e. Do you want to see and/or keep the placenta?
  - f. Vitamin K for the baby?
  - g. Do you want synthetic oxytocin after birth?
- 8. If a cesarean section is needed** (except in an emergency, where things move quickly and preferences cannot be accommodated): Would you like a second opinion before the decision? **Preferences during the cesarean, such as:** Having your partner/support person present at all times. Lowering the screen so you can see your baby being born. Having the procedure explained as it happens. Vaginal seeding. Immediate skin-to-skin contact with the baby. Having your partner or support person hold the baby as soon as possible. Taking photos, etc.
- 9. How do you plan to feed your baby?** Examples: exclusive breastfeeding, combination feeding, formula feeding. Do you have previous breastfeeding experience? How was it?

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072-444 98 15

