

BIRTH PREFERENCES

Why are birth plans important?

You may feel like birth is unpredictable and that you have no control over the outcome, so what's the point in making a birth "plan"?

You would be right in a sense, though a birth plan is less about creating a "perfect birth" and more about researching and choosing the options that are within your control.

Your birth plan can change in an instant. This is a fact, especially for first time birthers. However, you still have choices to make, and having them written down helps your health care providers know what your wishes are.

Options that you may have control over could include;

- Dim lights and music
- Use of narcotics or pain management
- Use of a bathtub or shower
- Use of synthetic oxytocin (may be suggested, if labour stalls or slows)
- Artificial rupture of membranes
- Use of IV for fluids only (IV is also used to administer medications)
- Pushing with or without coaching (if pushing is not effective, coaching may be suggested)
- Delayed cord clamping (cord may need to be clamped and cut, if baby needs to be examined right away)
- Vitamin K, erythromycin, newborn metabolic screening, newborn hearing test. etc.
- Photos during labour and birth
- Seeing or keeping the placenta

Most of these options are within the protocols of a hospital or birthing center, but it's always best to check with your care provider about what is and isn't allowed and then create your plan based off of what you discuss.

When creating your plan, be careful not to use words like "I want" or "I don't want", but rather say, "I would like" or "If possible", while also remembering that you have the last say in every decision.

You may also want to start your birth plan with something like this - "I understand that birth can be unpredictable, so I am open to interventions, if they are absolutely medically necessary" - It doesn't have to be worded exactly like this, but it's likely to be received better by those who are caring for you, if they see that you understand birth plans require some flexibility.

Other things to include in your preferences plan;

You will be asked lots of questions during labour, so that your health care providers can do their charting. One way to help streamline their process, is to include things like; weight before pregnancy, height, physical home address, age, baby number, past birthing interventions (if applicable), allergies, and medical history (surgeries and/or current medications).



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Name _____ Baby number _____ Baby's Gender/Sex _____

My birth team _____

My doctor/midwife _____

Health concerns/notes _____

Labour	Yes	No	Maybe	Other
• Would like music and dim lights				
• Open to using the shower or bathtub				
• Open to narcotics and/or laughing gas				
• Open to epidural				
• Open to residents in room				
• Open to artificial rupture of membranes				
• Comfortable with massage and physical touch				
• GBS antibiotics (if GBS positive)				
Birth				
• Push with coaching				
• Push in any position I choose				
• Assist in bringing baby to my chest				
• Discover the gender/sex myself (if applicable)				
• Partner will cut the cord				
• Delay cord clamping				
For how long:				
Cesarean (Planned or in the event of)				
• Have my partner join me in the OR				
• I would like to watch the birth (clear screen or mirror)				
• I would like to have immediate skin to skin (if possible)				
Baby				
• Plan on breastfeeding				
• Would like assistance with breastfeeding				
• Vitamin K shot				
• Erythromycin (eye ointment)				
• Newborn metabolic screen test/PKU test				
• Newborn hearing test				
• First bath in hospital				

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	Yes	No	Maybe	Other
Photos				
• Labour photos				
• Birth photos (not showing intimate areas)				
• Crowning and “intimate” photos				
• Breastfeeding photos				
• Newborn exam photos				
• Family photos				
Placenta				
• I would like to see my placenta				
• I am encapsulating my placenta				
• I am keeping my placenta for other reasons				
• I would like a print of my placenta				
Other				