

Work Sheet for Preparing Your Birth Plan

You might find this work sheet helpful as you prepare your birth plan. Place a (+) sign by the items that you clearly want or are open to, and a (-) sign by items you want to avoid unless medically necessary. Put a question mark by items you are unsure about, and plan to learn more about those options.

If your primary support person during the birth will be your life partner and co-parent, then you should work together on this, making sure you both understand all the options and that they understand your preferences. If you will work with a doula or other support person, complete it on your own, but review it with them as you prepare for the birth.

Options for Normal Labor and Birth

First Stage

Presence of partner/others

- Partner
- Doula (page 23)
- Friends or relatives
- Children (page 443)

Positions for labor (pages 221-223)

- Freedom to change positions, stand, and/or walk around
- Postural aids (birth ball, bathtub, peanut ball, or other)

Vaginal exams (page 251)

- At birthing parent's request
- When needed for clinical decision-making
- As few different examiners as possible
- At caregiver's discretion

Monitoring fetal heart rate (pages 252-253)

- Auscultation with stethoscope or ultrasound stethoscope
- Intermittent external electronic fetal monitoring (EFM)
- Continuous EFM with telemetry
- Continuous electronic monitoring (internal or external)

Food/fluids (page 210)

- Eat and drink as desired
- Clear fluids (Water, juice, Popsicles, ice chips)
- Intravenous (IV) fluids

Pain relief (Chapters 10 and 11)

- Emotional support and self-help measures
- Relaxation, breathing, positions, comfort measures
- Bathtub, whirlpool, or shower
- Analgesic medications (narcotics, nitrous)
- Epidural anesthesia

Second Stage (pushing and birth of baby)

Position for pushing and for birth (pages 222-223, 260)

- Mother's choice of positions
- Gravity-enhancing positions
- Caregiver's choice of positions

Care of perineum at birth (pp 264, 289-290)

- Warm compresses, controlled pushing, positions
- No episiotomy (willing to risk having a tear)
- Decision left to caregiver
- Episiotomy
- Forceps or vacuum extraction

Expulsion techniques (pages 259-260)

- Spontaneous bearing down
- Delayed pushing (if epidural used)
- Directed pushing
- Prolonged breath-holding and straining

Bed/equipment for pushing and for birth

- Birthstool, squat bar, bathtub, floor
- Birthing bed
- Delivery table with or without stirrups

Third Stage and First Hours after Birth	
Immediate care of baby (pages 264-268) <input type="checkbox"/> Delay clamping and cutting the cord <input type="checkbox"/> Partner cuts cord <input type="checkbox"/> In parent's arms for observation and exam <input type="checkbox"/> Near parents in bassinet or isolette <input type="checkbox"/> In nursery for observation, weighing	Warmth of baby (page 264) <input type="checkbox"/> Baby skin-to-skin with parent who birthed <input type="checkbox"/> Wrapped in warm blanket, held by parent <input type="checkbox"/> In heated bassinet in mother's room <input type="checkbox"/> In special heated unit in nursery
Clearing baby's airway (page 264) <input type="checkbox"/> Suction only if necessary <input type="checkbox"/> Suction with bulb syringe almost immediately	Cord blood collection (page 267) <input type="checkbox"/> Not planned <input type="checkbox"/> Public cord blood bank donation <input type="checkbox"/> Private or family cord blood collection and storage
Options for Unexpected Labor Events	
Induction (pages 275-283) <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid induction unless medically necessary <input type="checkbox"/> At mother's or caregiver's convenience <input type="checkbox"/> Self-induction methods <input type="checkbox"/> Stripping membranes <input type="checkbox"/> Cervical dilators <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial rupture of membranes <input type="checkbox"/> Cervical ripening agents (prostaglandins) <input type="checkbox"/> Induction agents (Pitocin)	Maternal exhaustion (pages 245-247, 283-287) <input type="checkbox"/> Rest, relaxation skills <input type="checkbox"/> Bathtub, dim lights, privacy <input type="checkbox"/> Narcotics or sedatives for sleep <input type="checkbox"/> Epidural anesthesia
Prolonged active labor (pages 283-287) <input type="checkbox"/> Walk, change positions, take a bath <input type="checkbox"/> Nipple stimulation <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial rupture of membranes <input type="checkbox"/> Medication (Pitocin)	Prolonged second stage (pages 288-290) <input type="checkbox"/> Rest from pushing <input type="checkbox"/> Change positions <input type="checkbox"/> Directed pushing <input type="checkbox"/> Pitocin <input type="checkbox"/> Vacuum extraction, forceps, and/or episiotomy
Suspected fetal distress (Pages 287-288 and 313-314) <input type="checkbox"/> Change position, uses oxygen <input type="checkbox"/> Fetal scalp stimulation to evaluate fetal well-being <input type="checkbox"/> Amnioinfusion <input type="checkbox"/> Continuous electronic fetal monitoring, internal scalp electrode <input type="checkbox"/> Cesarean delivery	Prolonged third stage (pages 299-300) <input type="checkbox"/> Placental separation encouraged by breast stimulation <input type="checkbox"/> Baby suckling on the breast <input type="checkbox"/> Upright position <input type="checkbox"/> Hastened with fundal massage <input type="checkbox"/> Hastened with medication or manual extraction of placenta
Cesarean Birth	
Timing of cesarean (pages 310-311) <input type="checkbox"/> Planned before labor begins <input type="checkbox"/> Planned after labor begins <input type="checkbox"/> Unplanned during labor, only done if medically indicated	Participation by mother <input type="checkbox"/> Mother watches delivery of baby (window in screen or screen lowered) <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor explains events during surgery <input type="checkbox"/> No description of events during surgery

Anesthesia (Chapter 10) <input type="checkbox"/> Regional anesthesia (spinal or epidural) <input type="checkbox"/> Regional anesthesia with or without sedation or tranquilizer <input type="checkbox"/> General anesthesia	Postoperative medications for trembling or nausea (page 317) <input type="checkbox"/> Only at birthing person's request <input type="checkbox"/> Medications with least effect on consciousness and memory <input type="checkbox"/> Medications at doctor's discretion
Presence of partner/others (page 318) <input type="checkbox"/> More than one supportive person present <input type="checkbox"/> Father or partner only <input type="checkbox"/> Partner sits or stands to watch or photograph surgery <input type="checkbox"/> Partner not present	Contact between baby and mother/parents (page 316) <input type="checkbox"/> Held by partner after birth, for birthing person to touch and see <input type="checkbox"/> Baby taken to nursery for well-baby observation <input type="checkbox"/> If baby goes to nursery, partner goes with baby <input type="checkbox"/> Partner remains with birthing person <input type="checkbox"/> If two support people, one goes with baby while other stays with birthing person
<h2>Postpartum Hospital Options</h2>	
Infant feeding (Chapter 18) <input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding / chestfeeding <input type="checkbox"/> Formula feeding	Controlling pain (page 319) <input type="checkbox"/> Use of self-help techniques to avoid medications <input type="checkbox"/> Medications (patient-controlled IV or oral)
Visits by family and friends <input type="checkbox"/> Unlimited visitation desired <input type="checkbox"/> Limit who will visit <input type="checkbox"/> Limit when visitors can come into room <input type="checkbox"/> Hours or amount of time limited by hospital	Dietary preferences <input type="checkbox"/> General diet <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian/vegan <input type="checkbox"/> Kosher <input type="checkbox"/> Food allergies and sensitivities <input type="checkbox"/> Early solid foods after cesarean <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Educational needs <input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding <input type="checkbox"/> Infant feeding <input type="checkbox"/> Baby care <input type="checkbox"/> Postpartum care for new mother <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Plans for follow-up from staff after discharge <input type="checkbox"/> Availability for clinic or home visit with mother-baby nurse <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of lactation help and support <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of phone call to/from hospital nurse <input type="checkbox"/> Amount of follow-up care desired by parents

Options for Healthy Baby Care for First Days	
<p>First feedings (pages 405-406)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding within first hour</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding, but could be delayed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Infant formula</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Feeding on cues from baby</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Feedings scheduled by hospital staff</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental feedings to breastfed baby</p>	<p>Circumcision (pages 372-373)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Immediately (within two days of age)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Delayed (within two weeks of age)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> With one or both parents present to comfort baby</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> With local anesthesia</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No anesthesia</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> At religious ceremony</p>
<p>Contact between baby and parents</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 24-hour rooming-in</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Daytime rooming-in</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> For feedings only, in nursery at other times</p>	<p>Newborn exam (pages 369-371)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Performed by baby's caregiver</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Performed by hospital caregiver</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Performed in presence of parents</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Performed in nursery away from parents</p>

Options for Unexpected Events for Newborn Baby	
Premature or Sick Baby	
Contact between baby and parents <input type="checkbox"/> Parents visit baby in nursery (as desired) <input type="checkbox"/> Kangaroo care for premature baby <input type="checkbox"/> Parents feed and care for baby as much as possible <input type="checkbox"/> If baby is in different hospital than parent, partner goes with baby	Feeding when baby is able to swallow milk (pages 428-429) <input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeed baby, if possible <input type="checkbox"/> Parent pumps breast milk and feeds baby by tube or bottle <input type="checkbox"/> Formula feeding by parents <input type="checkbox"/> Feeding expressed breast milk or formula by nurse
Contact with support group <input type="checkbox"/> Initiated by parents, nurses, or support group <input type="checkbox"/> No contact desired	Medications and procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Parent involvement in decision-making and procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Staff availability for updates to parents
Stillbirth or Death of Baby (Pages 303–304)	
These choices are highly personal and may not be desirable for all parents.	
Medication for laboring person before, during, or after childbirth <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> At their request <input type="checkbox"/> At caregiver's suggestion	Parent participation <input type="checkbox"/> Use of labor coping techniques (with or without pain medication) <input type="checkbox"/> Involved in decision-making <input type="checkbox"/> Labor management left to hospital staff
Parent's recovery and support <input type="checkbox"/> Recovery on maternity unit <input type="checkbox"/> Recovery in room separate from maternity unit <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual and grief counseling <input type="checkbox"/> Later contact with support group	Memories of baby <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain mementos (photographs, locks of hair, foot- and handprint, silhouettes, baby's blanket) <input type="checkbox"/> No mementos <input type="checkbox"/> Name baby
Contact with baby after death <input type="checkbox"/> See and hold baby after death <input type="checkbox"/> No contact with stillborn baby	Care of baby after death <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual or religious services <input type="checkbox"/> Autopsy <input type="checkbox"/> Burial or cremation