

BIRTH PLAN

A birth plan offers you the opportunity to think through your options and choose what is important to you during labor and at the time of birth. It should be developed by you, your birth partner, and those whom you wish to have an input. Your plan should consist of options that reflect your personal attitude toward labor and birth. This means you have researched and read reliable information and have chosen methods or ideas of what you would like for your birth experience.

A birth plan also helps communicate your desires to your caregivers in the hospital. This plan includes what we routinely encourage here at The Family Birthing Center of HRRMC. Hopefully, this will make it easier for you to develop your plan to meet your desires for your birth experience.

Sharing your hopes and dreams, as well as your fears and anxieties, will help you have a good birth experience. Once you have completed your plan, go over your choices with your physician, who will review, make suggestions, and answer any questions you may have. Your birth plan will then be sent to the Family Birthing Center with your other records. Please bring a copy with you when you are admitted.

This birth plan is not a contract, but a guide to those involved in your care. We expect that your birth will be uncomplicated. If the unexpected should occur, changes in your plan may become necessary. We will certainly do everything possible to fulfill your expectations. The form provided will address areas of common concern. Feel free to add any information. Always feel free, at any time, to ask questions of any of us here at The Family Birthing Center.

OUR BIRTH PLAN

Name: _____ **Birth Partner:** _____

We ask that you visit with your physician as to how and when he/she wants you to notify him/her that labor has begun. While some women may choose to spend time laboring at home others become anxious and feel more comfortable being at The Family Birthing Center.

If you have other children at home, you may need someone to care for them while you are in the hospital. We suggest that you have a plan of care ahead of time. Remember, labor may begin in the wee hours of the morning! If you plan to have your children present at the delivery, bring another adult (other than your birth partner) along to care for them.

You may have anyone you desire present at your baby's birth, with approval of your physician. Although there are rarely limitations, consider your comfort as your labor becomes active.

List the names of the people you may want to be present at your baby's birth:

We encourage you to be up and moving around during your labor. (We do have 2 birthing balls available.) We will initially monitor your baby's heart rate on the fetal heart monitor. This will take approximately 20-30 minutes. After this, we will monitor your baby intermittently. However, if the need should arise continuous monitoring may be necessary to assess the well being of your baby. Also, the use of medications, such as some pain relievers, epidurals, Pitocin, Cytotec, and Cervidil, will require continuous monitoring.

This brings us to the issue of pain relief. There are many methods for pain relief in labor. We believe in the ability of your body and will assist you in using such methods as position change, walking, relaxation, music, massage, back rubs, hydrotherapy (the tubs), using the birthing ball and breathing techniques. Medication is an option after labor is well established. Remember, that you are the primary decision maker in your care. We are there to support you and to be your advocate. We will be familiar with your desires prior to labor and will encourage you according to your wishes.

Please indicate your preferences for relaxation support and pain relief:

One of our goals is to provide ongoing encouragement for you and your birth partner during labor. This can occur verbally or through actions. In fact, actions have been shown to be just as effective as words. The use of a mirror to view progress or simply reaching down to feel the baby's head crowning may give you a feeling of renewed strength. You can expect that the use of encouraging words, suggestions, and actions will be given to you.

If you have any ideas of your own about what *may or may not* be encouraging to you and your birth partner please indicate:

The nurses will be reminding you to change positions during labor and possibly during pushing. This helps the baby move through the birth canal. This may include side lying, squatting, on hands and knees, as well as, semi-sitting while pulling your legs up.

There are various methods and positions for pushing. Please list any preferences you may have:

During delivery, the vaginal opening usually stretches to accommodate your baby's head and shoulders. If you have used prenatal perineal massage, continuation of this may help to prevent tearing or the need for an episiotomy (a cut to enlarge the vaginal opening). Warm compresses may be used to relax the perineum while you are pushing. You may wish to bring a small crock pot to use, to keep warm, moist washcloths at the bedside for the compresses. Your birth partner should be familiar with the technique in case your nurse does not have time to assist you with this. Patience and control are important at this time. Though not routinely done, an episiotomy may slightly shorten the length of pushing time, and may be necessary if the baby needs to be born quickly. Please discuss episiotomy and perineal massage with your physician. Please discuss any alternative positions for the birth with your physician: i.e. squatting, side lying, birthing stool, etc.

Please indicate your preferences for delivery: i.e. perineal massage, episiotomy, etc:

Your labor partner may want to take an active part in the birth of your baby. This participation may include hands on help with delivery of the baby or cutting the umbilical cord. The desire for this involvement may come spontaneously at the time of delivery, even to someone who thought "no way". Talk to your physician about this possibility before your labor.

How does your birth partner feel about clamping the cord?

Visitors

Not only is this an exciting time for you and your birth partner, friends and family are anxious to come meet the new baby. The Family Birthing Center has no scheduled visiting hours. We respect your desire to visit with family and friends at your request. A few things to think about include; your need to rest as much as possible before returning home, uninterrupted time while you and your baby practice and learn breastfeeding, and time to learn how to care for yourself and your baby. If you don't want visitors and are afraid to turn them away ask us to do it. We are your advocate and are willing to help in any way we can.

Please indicate any desires regarding visitors during your stay with us:

Routine Infant Care

The first few hours following birth are important to the bonding of the family. We feel that this time should be used for close contact of mother, infant, and family. If your baby is doing fine, your physician will immediately place your baby on your abdomen after the birth. Once the cord has been clamped and the infant has been dried, we encourage you to leave the baby skin to skin for the first one to two hours. If you plan to breastfeed, we encourage it be as soon after birth as your baby is ready. Hospital protocols call for assessment and admission routines for the baby. If there are no complications, we will admit and do your baby's first bath in the room you delivered in. Any complications with your baby *may* require separation of the baby from mom. Also, some procedures ordered prior to discharge, such as blood pressures, PKU or hearing screening may require us to take the infant to the nursery. If this occurs, you and/or your birth partner may accompany the infant.

Please state your preferences regarding your baby's care:

Newborns are at risk for bleeding during the first few days of life because they lack vitamin K. Vitamin K, normally produced by bacteria in the intestines, is not present at birth as the intestines are sterile. To decrease the risk of bleeding, a shot of vitamin K is given to infants during the initial assessment and care. Erythromycin eye ointment is administered to each of your baby's eyes after birth to prevent any infection that may have been picked up while going through the birth canal. The administration of these medications can be delayed up to 6 hours after birth, so as to not interfere with initial bonding.

Please list any objections you may have regarding the state recommended medications and why you refuse:

If you are **breast feeding** it is important to begin as soon as baby is ready. We will be there to assist you in getting the baby to breast the first time and as needed during your stay. If you ever feel the need for assistance, even after going home, please feel free to ask your nurse or call the department to speak with a nurse. Breast feeding itself is natural; however, it takes some practice to be comfortable with positioning and latching on. The baby needs to learn the feel of mother's nipple in his/her mouth and to coordinate the suck, swallow, breathe pattern. It is best not to try feeding with bottles for at least the first two weeks of life. This promotes a good start to the breast feeding without altering how your baby sucks. You may want to avoid pacifiers for this same reason. It is our policy not to supplement breast feeding babies unless medically necessary. Nor do we utilize pacifiers as a means to calm a fussy baby without your permission. If you choose to send the baby to the nursery while you sleep we will bring the baby to you when he/she is hungry.

If you are **bottle feeding**, or it becomes medically necessary, we will work with you also. Please express any questions about feeding your baby. Again, this includes after you have gone home.

Please indicate your choices for your baby's feeding experience by addressing bottles, formulas, cup feeding, pacifiers, and demand feeding:

A few other ideas that you may want to think about are photography, video options, and environmental issues. If you have any specific desires for your birthing experience such as music, lighting, specific methods, etc., feel free to express your thoughts in writing. Please bring a copy of your plan to an office appointment after you have completed it. Your physician will review your plan with you and answer any questions. You may also call the Family Birthing Center with any questions you may have regarding our protocols. Our number is 530-2277.

We have provided additional space for any further concerns that you may want to address.

Have a wonderful birth experience!!!!

