

Birth Plan Discussion Guide

Whether you intend to write a birth plan or not, thinking through your options and preferences regarding your birth can help your preparation. You may use the following guide to help in your decision-making process and to help guide conversations you may want to have with your medical care provider about your options, preferences, and their protocols.

3RD TRIMESTER CONSIDERATIONS

Cord blood banking for public donation or private use (note: you must order a kit prior to 34 weeks.)

Feelings on **induction**: methods & how many weeks gestation you would want to be. What are your provider's protocols on post-dates?

Stripping of membranes at a provider visit (your thoughts & provider's protocols)

Cervix exams at weekly appointments (or not - your preferences and provider's protocols)

LABOR & BIRTH

Fetal **Monitoring** (your preference & provider's protocols)

Your preferences & provider's protocols on **IV fluids**, ability to **eat/drink** (if no epidural)

Medical Pain Relief- IV pain meds and/or epidural (discuss your preferences & options)

Non-Medical Pain Relief (is there anything you want to bring or have available for your comfort?)

Would you like to use **hydrotherapy** (bath tub or shower) during labor? (provider & birth place protocols?)

Pushing (directed vs intuitive) & Provider's protocols/thoughts on "laboring down"

Pushing positions and **birth positions** (what do you want, what is your provider comfortable with?)

Perineal care & massage, management of tears, episiotomy (your preferences & provider's practice)

Delayed **cord clamping**? (Are you interested in this? What does your provider normally do?)

Who will cut the **umbilical cord**? (discuss your preferences)

IF A CESAREAN BIRTH IS NECESSARY

Do you have preferences on how a surgical birth is managed? What are your doctor's protocols? Are you interested in "family centered cesarean" practices? This can include dropping the drape to see your baby's birth, skin-to-skin and initiating breastfeeding in the OR. Who would you like to be with your during your birth and recovery? What are the hospital's policies and your provider's practices?

POSTPARTUM & NEWBORN CARE

Placenta - keep/discard? If keeping, make plans for safe storage and removal.

Feeding preferences - do you want to breastfeed or use formula?

Newborn medications: erythromycin, vitamin K, hepatitis B (your preferences & provider/birth location protocols on refusal if you choose to forego any routine newborn care)

Circumcision (yes or no, if yes - when/where/who)

Visitors (yes or no, if yes, who & when)

IS YOUR BIRTH LOCATION "BABY FRIENDLY®"?

Baby-Friendly® is a registered certification mark of Baby-Friendly USA, Inc. Hospitals that choose to earn this designation must implement 10 specific practices that promote breastfeeding. If your birth location is Baby-Friendly® or working toward it, you can expect to be encouraged to do skin-to-skin and breastfeed within 1 hour of birth. Formula won't be offered unless medically necessary and pacifiers will not be available. You'll room-in with your baby and baby's first bath will not happen immediately.