



Your Birth Plan / Preferences:

In other words - "I wish to..." "I would prefer..."

Using a birth plan is not about planning the perfect labour and birth; it's about realising the options, choices and possibilities that may arise during your labour and birth. Having thought about these before hand, and discussed how you feel about them with your partner/caregiver/support people can often make the whole process a lot less daunting. Having a good idea of what you value around your birth, your body, your baby ensures you stay at the centre of the experience.

There are many options and possibilities for labour and birth. By the time you have read some books, watched some videos, attended some birth education sessions, you will have some idea of the things you would like to have happen during birth and also those things you would like to avoid.

To help you clarify your ideas, the list below offers a number of possible options. Hospitals vary enormously in the services they offer and the routines they use to manage labour. In many places, you will be encouraged to labour as you wish, and the issues listed below will not arise. However, don't rely on this – it is better to have discussed your ideas in advance than to be disappointed later when your preferences run counter to prevailing hospital routines and protocols.

Assume the pregnancy, labour and birth will be normal, unless there are clear medical indications that a problem has occurred. Go through the list, and note which options you would like (tick), those you don't want (cross) and those options you don't (yet) have strong feelings about (---).

Then once you are clear on what's important to both of you, rewrite your birth 'plan' in an easy to read, point form manner, ideally on one page. Remember, there are many preferences you can combine in one sentence.

If there is anything you are unsure about or unfamiliar with, this list will help begin a dialogue with your caregiver(s). This ensures every choice you make is an informed one.

LABOUR

- To have these support people _____
- To have our support person(s) present at all times
- To wear hospital gown
- To wear my own clothes
- To bring in pillows/bedding from home
- To be a teaching patient (students and staff present at any time)
- To consent to electronic fetal monitoring (EFM) test trace on admission
- To have an internal examination on arrival
- To return home/stay home if not in established labour
- To have access to food and drink throughout labour / brought in from home
- To have an intravenous line put in during labour

- To have external fetal monitoring throughout labour
 - To have internal fetal monitoring (scalp electrode) (if applicable)
 - To have my baby's heartbeat monitored by hand (fetal stethoscope)
 - To have I.V. antibiotics in labour (e.g. for Group B strep)
 - To use music/headphones, aromatherapy, homeopathics, rescue remedy throughout labour
 - To dim the lighting, use a lamp only
 - To have private and quiet environment within the room
 - To have staff quietly knock before entering the room to maintain the established labour environment
 - To be able to choose positions/activity in labour; *walking, sitting, squatting, kneeling, rocking etc*
 - To use natural forms of pain relief; *heat, water, massage, pressure points*
 - To use various aides for comfort during labour; *mats on floor, fit balls, beanbags, pillows*
 - To have an internal vaginal examination for specific medical indications only
 - To be given full information on risks & benefits (& alternatives) of each suggested medical procedure
 - To have my membranes artificially ruptured
 - To receive artificial hormones (oxytocin) to boost contractions or induce labour
 - To have access to water for pain relief; *labour pool (portable) shower or bath*
 - To receive analgesia or anaesthesia for pain in labour...kind preferred _____
 - To have pain relief given only when asked for by myself, and not 'offered' during labour
 - To be consulted on all decisions in the event of something unexpected
 - To be given time to and discuss and make decisions with my support person(s)
 - To have siblings present (if applicable)
 - To have the presence of an interpreter (if applicable)
 - Additional ideas
-

THE BIRTH

- To have my chosen person(s) present during actual birth _____
- To have siblings present for birth
- To birth in the same room as I laboured in
- To choose the position for second stage that is most comfortable to me
- To have no specific time limit on second stage, if progress is being made
- To begin pushing only when I feel the urge (unmedicated), i.e. no coaching from staff
- To have my body draped with sheets for the birth
- To be semi-clothed or naked for the birth
- To receive an episiotomy

- To have hot compresses placed on the perineum with crowning (by my support person)
- To have photos/video of the birth
- To be able to touch the baby during birth
- To have a mirror available to see what is going on
- To have a midwife to assist my baby's birth
- To have either the father or myself assisting with actual birth by hand
- To have a female rather than male doctor present for the birth (if available)
- To have the father or myself discover the sex of the baby
- To have the baby handed immediately to mother or father once born
- To have skin-to-skin contact between mother/father and baby immediately after birth
- To have the vernix left on the baby and not wiped off
- To have the APGARS done while mother or father holding baby
- To let my baby take their first breaths unassisted (no immediate suctioning etc)
- To delay the cord clamping until after it stops pulsating
- To have _____ cut the cord
- To place baby at breast after the birth to stimulate expulsion of placenta and begin bonding
- To receive artificial hormone injection (oxytocin) after the birth to expel the placenta
- To wait for placenta to come away naturally
- To adopt an upright position or one comfortable for me, to birth the placenta
- To have the placenta examined in front of, and explained to me
- To have the baby weighed/measured in our presence after an initial period_____
- To arrange for the placenta to be taken home

UNEXPECTED EVENTS

- To have partner/support person present during a Caesarean section_____
- To receive *epidural/spinal/general* for pain relief for this procedure
- To be given explanations of what is occurring with the surgery
- To have the screen lowered to view the birth
- To have photos taken of the birth
- To have _____ cut the cord
- To have skin-to-skin contact after the birth; baby placed on mothers chest
- To have partner or mother to be with baby at all times
- To have breastfeeding occur as soon as possible / within the hour after birth

POSTNATAL

- To breastfeed on demand from birth
- To feed my baby artificial formula milk

- To have our baby to remain with mother at all times day and night (unless a medical emergency)
- To have person(s) of choice in mothers room at any time of day _____
- To receive help with breastfeeding on request if required
- To offer my baby a dummy
- To have vitamin K given to my baby; *by oral dose OR injection*
- To not have Vitamin K given to my baby
- To have Hep B immunisation given to my baby
- To not have Hep B immunisation given to my baby
- To have the Guthrie's Test/PKU performed on my baby
- To not have the Guthrie's Test/PKU performed on my baby
- To make arrangements for my baby boy to be circumcised
- To not have my baby boy circumcised
- To discharge from hospital as soon as I wish (unless a medical emergency)

Additional ideas.....