

Guide 10: Deciding on Your Birth Plan

Everyone has different expectations of how childbirth will be. To make sure you're as prepared and comfortable as can be when the magical moment happens, here's a guide on how to come up with a birth plan.



Everyone has different ways to welcome their babies into the world. Some women may want to do without pain relief during childbirth; others may want to blast their favourite music playlist in the delivery suite. The good news is, you do have a choice! You just have to put pen to paper and draw up a birth plan sometime around week 31.

A birth plan is not a contract, and it doesn't have to be done in a formal way. It's a way to communicate your wishes to those who will be directly or indirectly taking care of your childbirth, such as your doctor and the midwife. It's a good way to have all your wishes on one piece of paper so you don't forget anything during the ensuing rush! Do note, however, that certain hospitals may have different policies, such as only allowing one person in to the delivery room, or not allowing your partner around in the event of a Caesarean section, so be sure to check before making plans on these.

The most important thing is to have a detailed discussion with your doctor regarding the process of labour, pain management and other concerns. Here's a checklist of items to think about:

During Labour

- Do you prefer to move about or lie down during labour?
- Do you prefer to have pain relief or to go without?
- Do you have any preferences for which pain medications to have?
- Do you have any preferences for a certain position to give birth, such as semi-sitting, standing, kneeling or lying down?
- If you need a Caesarean section, do you have any special requests?
- Do you prefer to wear your own clothes?
- Do you prefer to have some drinks and snacks during labour?
- Do you prefer to listen to music? If so, what music?
- Who do you prefer to be present at the childbirth?

After Delivery

- Would you like your partner to cut the umbilical cord?
- Would you like to claim the placenta after childbirth?
- Would you like to store the cord blood?
- Would you like to hold onto the baby immediately after childbirth?
- Would you like to breastfeed immediately after childbirth?

Once you've discussed these questions with your partner and have written down your wishes, go through it with your doctor, just in case there are any safety or health issues to consider. You should also expect to be flexible if the doctor alerts you to any. After all, your safety is paramount.

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Sources:

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