

BIRTH DAY IDEAS

It is your baby's birthday and your birthing day: CELEBRATE! After a woman gives birth, endorphins flood her body giving her what we call a "birth high." You may want to celebrate immediately after birth or you may want to wait until the next day when family can join you. Whatever you decide, here are some ideas for planning your birth celebration.

- ❖ Ask caregivers and birth team members to avoid announcing the gender of your baby. (Midwives typically respect this aspect of birthing.) What a wonderful, once in a lifetime discovery to make on your own!
- ❖ Consider preparing letters to be read in early labor. Some couples write letters to one another, listing all the reasons you are grateful for your spouse, all she/he brings to this birth and the traits he/she possesses that will make her/him a good parent. Maybe you'll write a love letter to your baby and have someone read it to you while you labor. What a great gift for your baby!
- ❖ Bake a birthday cake. This is a great early labor activity or siblings might enjoy preparing the cake.
- ❖ Nancy Wainer Cohen, author and midwife, brings birthday hats to the births she attends. She brings hats for everyone, even hospital staff, to remind them all that this is a birth day.
- ❖ Remember photos and videos. Think about what kind of pictures you want to have. Do you want baby-coming-out-pictures? Or do you just want family pictures after? Remember to get a photo of your birth team, including midwife/doctor, doula, nurses, or anyone else who participated.
- ❖ Who will catch the baby? Many midwives will give Dad the option of catching the baby.
- ❖ Consider saying a special prayer for cutting the umbilical cord. Who will cut the cord? Mom? Dad?
- ❖ Do you want to see your placenta? It is an amazing organ and it nourished your baby for 9 months. Some women bury their placentas and plant a special tree or plant over it. Most midwives leave your placenta for you to dispose of. If you want your placenta, check with your doctor or hospital for their policy.
- ❖ Remember to have a gift for siblings from the baby. Ask family members and close friends to remember to bring goodies for the new brother or sister when they bring goodies for the new baby.
- ❖ What do you want to drink to celebrate? Sparkling grape or apple juice is a fabulous choice. Bradley tradition suggests ice cold orange juice.
- ❖ What do you want to eat to celebrate?
- ❖ What do you want to wear to celebrate? What will the baby wear?
- ❖ Is there a special song you'd like to play for your baby after she/he is born? What's the first thing you want your baby to hear?
- ❖ Who gives baby his/her first kiss? Siblings may be thrilled with this honor (or they might just rather wait to become more comfortable and familiar with baby).
- ❖ Prepare a special place for the baby's footprints. There may be a spot for this in your baby book. Consider adding sibling's hand and/or foot prints, too.
- ❖ Have siblings prepare "It's a..." signs to augment or replace the signs many hospitals/midwives give you.
- ❖ What will you do with the baby's cord when it falls off? Many cultures have special ceremonies or traditions for the cord.
 - ❖ My Cajun family always buried the cord on the north side of the house where rain falls.
 - ❖ In Bali, the cord is kept in a special decorated box until the child is ready to leave home. At that time, the mother gives the child the cord as a symbol of their separation.
- ❖ Take some time after your birth to record your baby's birth story. Include your feelings the first time you saw and held your baby, the impact on your body and spirit. You will treasure it in the years to come and it will make a wonderful, thoughtful gift for your "baby" when she/he is all grown up!