

## CLAIMING YOUR BIRTH SPACE

You are having a baby! You will carry the memories of this day forever. This is the stuff of family legends. Make your birth place, like your birth story, your own! Use the list below as inspiration for your own ideas for personalizing your birth space.

- ☺ Put a sign on your door. Decorate it or have your older children decorate it.
  - \* Natural birth in progress! All positive comments welcome.
  - \* Drug-free labor in progress. Please do not offer drugs or epidural. Thank you for your confidence and support.
- ☺ Introduce yourself to the staff. Put your name over your bed. Let your children decorate the sign.
- ☺ On the wall at the foot of every hospital bed in the world, there is a clock. (Recent remodeling at West Houston Hospital has eliminated clocks at the foot of the bed! Yay!) Laboring women need not be slaves to time. They need to labor according to their own body's rhythm. Consider turning off or covering clocks (pillow cases work well for this).
- ☺ Change the lights to suit you. Dim, “romantic” lighting helps most women relax and slip into labor land.
- ☺ Bring flowers to open as you do. Place buds in warm water and watch them open as you open for your baby.
- ☺ Bring music, if it appeals to you. Bring calming, relaxing sounds, as well as music for when it is time to get working. How about some belly dancing music?
- ☺ Are scents important to you? Try putting a tiny bit of scent on a cotton ball. If the smell starts to bother you, it can be removed. Be careful with scents: they can make you nauseous in labor and are terribly difficult to get rid of in a labor and delivery room where the windows do not open.
  - \* Lavender for relaxation
  - \* Jasmine to strengthen/stimulate contractions
  - \* Neroli, Bergamot, Rose, Frankincense to relieve anxiety and fears
  - \* Pam England (midwife and educator) recommends lavender, chamomile, rose geranium, Ylang Ylang
- ☺ Is your nurse working for you?
  - \* One study showed correlation between cesarean section rate and nurse, independent of doctor.
  - \* Try to get along as well as you can. If the situation is unbearable, dad should quietly ask to speak with the Charge Nurse in private. Ask if she can help you find someone who is a better fit for you.
- ☺ Flatter the staff. My sister was a nurse and she tells me that nurses have an unnatural affinity for food at work.
  - \* This is a good job for family members.
  - \* Have someone bring cookies (store bought) or a fruit basket.
  - \* Have family thank nurses for caring for you when they leave after visiting. Everyone likes to be appreciated and making sure the staff knows you appreciate them makes for better care for you.