

CREATING A BIRTH PLAN

- ☺ Remember, all birth plans tend to look the same to hospital staff. Make yours stand out!
 - ✓ Use pretty paper.
 - ✓ Write from your baby's perspective.
- ☺ Hospital staff will read your birth plan, but be respectful of their time. Make it precise and short. Bullets work well.
- ☺ Place items on the birth plan in the order in which they will occur, i.e., “Please leave the bed intact for delivery” comes before “Mom will cut the cord”.
- ☺ Your birth plan should fit on one page.

How to get started

- ⇒ Look at the Word Frame/Image of opening picture we did in class. (If we did not do the Word Frame/Image of opening picture, just close your eyes and picture what your birth will be like.) What kind of feelings/birthing ambiance are important to you? Will all your needs be met?
- ⇒ You have probably made several versions, you just may not have written them down.
 1. Your personal version – Probably just in your head and heart
 - * Essentially a list of your wishes, expectations, ideas and needs
 - * May take the form of a journal or to-do list
 - * May be quite long as it covers all aspects of your birth and all members of your birth team
 2. Birth Team version for family members, doula, spouse, siblings, care providers (midwife or obstetrician). Consider writing it in the form of a letter. Include:
 - * Your expectations
 - Who will be in the room when you birth
 - Who can visit and leave
 - Who should be in a supporting role ever so far from you
 - * Your feelings
 - * Your specific wishes
 - * Affirmations to be used for encouragement
 - * Specific coping techniques that appeal to you
 - * Analogies of opening that you like
 - * Why you want the birth you are planning
 - * Why you chose each person to be on your birth team
 3. A version for an in-office visit with your care provider; notes for a conversation. Include:
 - * Specific wishes
 - * Interventions to avoid
 - * Staff involvement (Do you want a nurse talking to you or your doula?)
 - * Special additional support you require (Perineal massage? Warm compresses?)
 - * Birthing positions you anticipate choosing
 - * Specific ways Dad plans to assist
 4. A version for Labor and Delivery nurse/staff
 - * A summary of those things agreed upon by you and your care provider
 - * Very brief, bulleted statements; one page maximum.
- ⇒ Consider making a birth plan for your baby. It is ideal if it fits on the front of the page with your birth plan or you may put baby’s plan on the back of the one for birth. Would you prefer that your baby be cleaned and swaddled before you meet one another or do you want the baby immediately after birth? Do you want to never be separated from your baby? Do you want the baby to receive eye drops? What about vaccinations and Vitamin K? Are you going to breastfeed? Do you wish for your baby to not receive a bottle? Do you plan to circumcise your son?
- ⇒ Have extra copies of each of your birth plan versions with you for your birth.
 - * You may not get your care provider (you may end up with their backup).
 - * Be ready to discuss your birth plan early in labor, as soon as you know who will attend your birth.