



A GUIDE TO

Your Birth Experience



Welcome

Our team wants to make sure you have the best birth experience possible. Your thoughts, wishes, and choices are important to us. Please share any communication, cultural, or religious preferences with your care team.

This guide was made to help you to consider what you would like to talk about with your health care team.

You may have 1 primary support person during your labor, birth, and postpartum stay. You can also choose to work with a doula or trained labor support person in addition to your primary support person.

We ask you to consider your preferences for your birth experience and wishes. Please plan to discuss your birth preferences during your next visit and upon arrival to the hospital.

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Medical Care Items

These are items that are important for your care team to have or know when you arrive at the hospital to give birth and for after delivery:

- Insurance provider card
- Pharmacy name and phone number where you get prescriptions filled
- Advance directives and/or Living Will, as desired
- Name, location, and phone number of your new baby's doctor (pediatrician or family practitioner)
- Blood pressure monitor, if received from provider during prenatal care



Comfort and Support Items

These are things that some women find helpful during their labor and postpartum experience in the hospital. You may find this list helpful as you are beginning to pack and plan for your stay with us:

- Lotion or oil for massage
- Lip balm or moisturizer
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, and mouthwash*
- Brush, comb, and/or hair tie or headband
- Contact lenses, glasses, and glasses case
- Robe, pajamas, slippers, and other clothing as desired
- Socks*
- Pillows or other personal items that may be comforting (we suggest items that are disposable or easily washed)*
- One or more items for back massage
- Essential oils and/or non-water based, battery-operated diffusers
- Pad, pencil, pens, cards, books, and travel games
- Cell phone and charger
- Laptop or tablet and charger
- Camera (the care team can assist with pictures and/or videos as permitted)
- Snacks and medicines for your partner (including over the counter medicines)
- Leave jewelry at home and consider removing piercings

* Items provided by the hospital



Comfort Management Provided by the Hospital

- Hot/cold therapy (hospital provides disposable hot and cold packs)
- Tub/shower for hydrotherapy, if available
- Birthing ball/peanut ball
- Push bar
- Intravenous acetaminophen and/or IV opioids
- Nitrous Oxide - when breathed in, reduces anxiety and pain, if available
- Epidural - a local anesthetic injected in the lower back around the spinal nerves to block pain from contractions

Tips For Your Comfort

There are several things you can do to manage discomfort during your stay. Some helpful approaches are below but may not be available in your hospital or medically appropriate in a particular situation:

- Use deep breathing and meditation as a relaxation technique
- Dim lights
- Quiet the room as much as possible
- Use a fan for cool air
- Play your favorite music (bring your own method to play it)
- Wear your own clothes
- Walk or move around
- Get a massage from your partner or support person
- Hydrate with clear liquids
- Use self-hypnosis
- Establish a focal point



Labor Options

If you are having a vaginal birth, please discuss with your nursing care team any personal preferences you may have. A nurse will be with you the entire time you are pushing and may offer the following types of coaching and options:

- Countdown method
- Positive language
- Soft spoken or louder verbal voice
- Having your body guide you when and how to push
- Trying various pushing positions
- Watching your pushing and birth using a mirror
- Touching your baby's head while crowning

Preferences during the delivery to consider:

- Delaying your baby's umbilical cord from being clamped and having your partner or support person cut the umbilical cord, if medically appropriate

- Collection of cord blood for public or private banking
- Holding your baby with skin-to-skin contact as soon as possible after birth, sometimes referred to as the "Golden Hour"
- Having your baby stay in your room, unless the baby's medical care needs to occur in a different room

If you are being induced to go into labor, you may be offered these options:

- Cervical balloon placement – a catheter like device that can be used to soften and open the cervix
- Misoprostol - an oral or vaginal medicine that works by softening the cervix and starting contractions
- Dinoprostone - a vaginal insert that contains medicine to soften the cervix
- Oxytocin, also called Pitocin® - an intravenous medicine used to cause contractions
- Rupture of membranes, (breaking the "bag of water")



If you are having a cesarean section (C-section), a nurse will be with you the entire time in the operating room and you may be offered the following options:

- Having your partner or support person present in the operating room
- Playing music in the operating room (bring a method to play it)
- Collection of cord blood for public or private banking

- Holding your baby with skin-to-skin contact as soon as possible after birth, sometimes referred to as the "Golden Hour"
- Having your partner hold your baby
- Having your baby stay in your room, unless the baby's medical care needs to occur in a different room



Baby Care After Delivery

These medicines are given to your baby shortly after birth:

- Vitamin K - a shot in the thigh to prevent potentially life threatening bleeding in babies
- Erythromycin - eye ointment that protects babies from bacterial eye infections that can be acquired during or after birth
- Hepatitis B vaccine - a shot to help prevent getting Hepatitis B during their lifetime. It is more effective when given at birth instead of 1st pediatrician appointment

Choose feeding option:

- Human milk only, preferred when possible
- Mix of human milk and formula feeding
- Formula only

Additional after delivery options:

- If your baby is a boy, you will need to choose if a circumcision is to be performed in the hospital
- Request a prescription for breast pump, if needed
- Share your dietary considerations or special needs



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