



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.

This guide will help you to consider your birth experience options. Please share your communication, cultural, or religious preferences with your care team during your next visit.

You may have 2 support persons 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 support persons.

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## Medical Care Items

Please bring the following with you to the hospital:

- Insurance card
- Name and phone number of your preferred pharmacy
- Advance Directives and/or Living Will documents, if desired
- Name, location, and phone number of your new baby's pediatrician
- Blood pressure monitor, if given to you during prenatal care



## Comfort and Support Items

Here are items that some people find helpful to have during their labor and postpartum experience.

Review this list when packing and planning for your stay with us:

- Lotion or oil for massage
- Lip balm or moisturizer
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, and mouthwash\*
- Brush, comb, hair tie, and/or headband
- Contact lenses, glasses, and glasses case
- Robe, pajamas, and slippers
- Socks\*
- Disposable or easily washed pillows\* and/or other comfort items
- Back massage items
- Essential oils and/or non-water based, battery-operated diffusers
- Paper, pencils, pens, cards, books, and travel games
- Cell phone, laptop, and/or tablet and chargers
- Camera - the care team can help with pictures and/or videos as permitted
- Snacks and medicines (prescribed and over the counter) for your partner

Leave jewelry and valuables at home and consider removing piercings.

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\* Items provided by the hospital



### Comfort Management Provided by the Hospital

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

*\*May not be available at all hospitals*

### Tips For Your Comfort

There are things you can do to help you feel more comfortable and relaxed during your birth experience. Some helpful ideas are listed below. Not all of these may be available in certain medical situations.

- Do deep breathing and meditation exercises
- Dim the lights
- Quiet the room
- 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 a support person
- Drink clear liquids
- Use self-hypnosis
- Establish a focal point



## Labor Options

Please discuss your preferred labor options with your care team.

### Induction of Labor

If you are being induced into labor, you may be offered the following options:

- Cervical balloon placement - a very small, flexible tube (called a catheter) with a small balloon at the end that can soften and open the cervix
- Misoprostol - an oral or vaginal medicine that softens the cervix and starts contractions
- Dinoprostone - a vaginal insert that contains medicine to soften the cervix
- Oxytocin, also called Pitocin® - an intravenous (IV) medicine that causes contractions
- Membrane rupture, also known as “breaking your water”

### Vaginal Birth

If you are having a vaginal birth, 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 spoken voice
- Having your body guide you when and how to push
- Trying different pushing options
- Watching your pushing and birth using a mirror
- Touching your baby’s head while crowning

#### Things to consider:

- Delay the clamping of your baby’s umbilical cord, if medically approved
- Have your partner or support person cut the umbilical cord
- Collect cord blood for public or private banking
- Hold your baby with skin-to-skin contact as soon as possible after birth, sometimes called the “Golden Hour”



- Have your baby stay with you in your room (also known as “rooming in”), unless they have certain medical care needs

### Cesarean Section (C-section)

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

- Have your partner or support person in the operating room with you

- Play music in the operating room (bring your own method to play it)
- Collect cord blood for public or private banking
- Hold your baby with skin-to-skin contact as soon as possible after birth, sometimes called the “Golden Hour”
- Have your baby stay with you in your room (also known as “rooming in”), unless they have certain medical care needs

## 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 - an eye ointment that protects babies from bacterial eye infections they can get during or after birth
- Hepatitis B vaccine - a shot to help prevent Hepatitis B during the baby's lifetime. It is more effective when given at birth rather than at their 1<sup>st</sup> pediatrician appointment

### Choose a feeding option:

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

### Additional after delivery options:

- If your baby is a boy, you will need to decide if you want them to be circumcised in the hospital
- Request a prescription for a breast pump, if needed
- Share your dietary restrictions with us

## Skin-to-Skin

Skin-to-skin should start right after birth and continue in the first few weeks to months after birth. It provides many benefits for you and your baby. Skin-to-skin helps:

- You and your baby to get to know each other and bond.

- To control your baby's temperature, blood sugar, and heart rate.
- You to learn your baby's feeding cues and promotes breastfeeding.
- Your baby stay more alert and cry less.

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It is important that your baby is safe while skin-to-skin. Here are some tips you should follow:

- Cover your baby's back with blankets; **do not** cover their head or face
- Place your baby so that their:
  - Face can be seen
  - Head is in the "sniffing" position, with nose upturned
  - Mouth and nose are not covered
  - Head is turned to one side and you can see their nose
  - Neck is straight, not bent
- Mom should be upright, not flat, while in a chair or in bed

If you feel tired after a feeding or when your baby is skin-to-skin, put your baby on their back in their own bed or bassinet. **Do not sleep while your baby is skin-to-skin.**

## Birth Registry Information

To get your baby's birth certificate, you will need to give a mailing address (a post office box is acceptable). There are forms that need to be filled out after your baby is born.

The forms that need to be completed are:

- **Birthing Parent's Worksheet:** You will need to provide information such as your name, date of birth, and social security information.
- **Birth Facility Worksheet:** This includes medical and health information from medical records and information that our birth registry team fills out.

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There are additional forms that you may be asked to fill out:

- **Acknowledgement of Paternity:** This needs to be completed if a baby is born to an unmarried birthing parent.
- **Affidavit of Birthing Parent to Register Child's Parent Other Than a Spouse:** This needs to be completed if the birthing parent decides not to name a legal spouse as the other parent of the baby.

If the baby is carried and delivered by a gestational carrier (not carried by the biological parent), there are more forms for the carrier and intended parents to complete.

After your baby is born, a staff member will meet with you to register your baby's birth. They will ask for the name of your baby and other information. If you do not name your baby before leaving the hospital, you will have 5 days to do so. After that, the birth certificate will be sent to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics without a name. You can contact the Bureau to add or change a name.

Birth certificates are issued for free by the Bureau of Vital Statistics. If you need more copies, there is a \$20 fee you can pay by mail or in person.

Please call your local Department of Health with any questions or concerns.

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