



Labor and birth can be unpredictable. It's smart to be prepared with questions to ask to decide if what your provider is recommending is needed and right for you. Keep the following in mind, especially when you hear words like "induction," "episiotomy," "fetal monitoring" and "C-section." Also keep in mind that it can be helpful to have a support person with you who can help you navigate the

## Questions to Ask During Labor & Birth

- 1 Is my baby in any danger? Am I in any danger?** Asking about the safety and health of you and your baby can steer you to the safest, healthiest outcome. If the answer is "no" to both questions, it's more than likely that the intervention your provider is recommending is not needed.
- 2 What happens if I go through with this intervention? What are the risks and benefits?** Most health care providers want a laboring woman to feel comfortable, so there's a tendency to answer questions like this with, "It's really safe," or "I don't usually see a problem with this." But, all interventions have pros and cons. If you know what they are, you can weigh your options and make the best, most informed choices.
- 3 What does the research say?** Not all medical practices are based on the best research. In fact, the majority of interventions are shown to be overused and often unnecessary. As your care provider, he or she should know whether the intervention is backed by science.
- 4 Is there another alternative?** There are plenty of alternatives to common interventions. For example, epidurals are not the only option for pain management; movement during labor, pressure points and breathing exercises are natural ways to help with pain relief. Consider the alternatives first, so you can get the care that's right for you and your baby. Lamaze childbirth education classes can help you identify very practical, effective alternatives to ease the pain.