



# BIRTH PREFERENCE CHECKLIST

This is a list of things to think about that you may or may not want during your birthing experience. Go through this list and pick the top 10 most important things to you and write your birth preference sheet. You will give copies of this to your care provider and medical staff.

## Onset of labor

- Would you like to remain at home until labor is well established ?
- Would you like to let labor start naturally?
- My partner to film and take pictures.

## Admission to hospital:

- To wear your own clothes.
- Who you'd like to have with you (besides your partner) during labor and/or at delivery — a doula, your other children, friends, family?
- Would you like to return home if labor is not well established at 4 cm. to 6 cm.
- Do you want an IV or not? You can request a heplock instead.
- You can request that your room be dimly lit with soft music and a quiet atmosphere.
- Do you need to communicate what type of birth you're planning. Some hospitals will put a sign on your door asking those who enter to be quiet and aware of your birthing space.

## During Active Labor:

- You can request Few, if any, vaginal exams.
- Intermittent electronic fetal monitoring unless circumstances call for extended monitoring.
- You can request freedom of movement to labor in any position you feel like.
- Having blood pressure cuff removed between monitoring.
- As few disturbances as possible.
- The use of natural means before moving to any medical intervention or augmentations to your labor.

- You may ask for the patience of the birthing staff while baby is descending and emerging.
- You might want to Forego medical interventions, including rupturing of membranes and augmentation, without clear medical need.
- Feel free to walk, move about, and to find the most comfortable and effective positions for you.
- Eating or drinking during active labor
- To use natural means before turning to intervention if baby requires more optimal repositioning. ([spinningbabies.com](http://spinningbabies.com) has great resources on positions to help reposition baby).
- You can ask for your care provider to exercise patience if labor slows or rests, and use only natural means to stimulate labor if needed.
- Do you want to be in a tub for labor and/or birth?
- Do you want to personalize the atmosphere with music, lighting, items from home.
- Check on what equipment the hospital has and what you might bring with you – exercise ball, in-room shower, birthing tub and request the items available.

## During Pushing:

- You might want to request to assume a position of your choice, change position, or remain in a relaxed pose.
- To breathe your baby down to crowning.
- To bear down only when your body is in a contraction and ask the staff to have patience between contractions.
- Give space for allowing mother's body to dictate when breathing down or bearing down is called for.

## During Birth:

- Request not performing an episiotomy, using forceps or Vaccum, unless medically necessary.
- You can decline artificial oxytocin to prevent hemorrhage, unless there is clear indication of need.
- You can request to not have your care provider stretch the perineum as the baby is being born.
- Would you like a parent to receive baby once head and shoulders are born?
- You can request a naturally released placenta without manipulation.

## For Baby:

- To decline routine suctioning for baby; to have airway suctioned only if medically necessary.
- To have baby placed directly on mother's abdomen, without wrapping for skin to skin.
- You can request that they not wipe off the vernix. Simply place the baby on mom.
- Do you want to delay in cutting the cord until it has stopped pulsating?
- You can request the medical staff honor the "golden hour" for bonding with your baby.
- Would you like the Application of prophylactic eye medication only after family bonding time?
- Use of oral Vitamin K in multiple doses or delay Vitamin K injections.
- Rooming In - Having baby remain with parents at all times.
- One or both parents enjoying skin to skin bonding with the newborn.
- You can request that staff to discuss any standard procedures that are performed upon baby before they occur.
- Do you want to ask for the patience of the staff to allow the baby to breast crawl to the nipple for self-attachment?
- What are your plans for breastfeeding?
- You may request postponing weighing the baby and/or administering eye drops until after the "golden hour".
- Are you encapsulating your placenta? You will need to make sure your care provider and medical staff are aware.

**The power of a birth plan isn't the actual plan. It's the process of becoming educated about all of your options.**