

Birth Plan



You're having a baby! This is an exciting time. But you may also be nervous about some things, including the hard work and pain of labor and delivery. Creating a birth plan can help. This birth plan template focuses primarily on pain management and other medical topics related to labor and delivery. It also provides questions for you to ask your health care providers and prompts you for information that can help you make important decisions.

General information

Your name _____

Your age _____ Due date _____

Your health care provider

Name _____

Phone _____

Planned location for the birth

Name of hospital or birthing facility _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Your baby's pediatrician

Name _____

Phone _____

The people you want with you during labor and delivery

Primary support person _____

Phone _____ Others _____

Pain management

It is important to understand all of your pain management options – for labor, delivery and recovery – so you can make the decisions that are best for you. Use the following as a guide for discussion and decision-making. Talk to a physician anesthesiologist (a pain management specialist) months before delivery, so you are prepared. You remain free to change your mind during your labor.

1. In preparation for consultations with your OB-GYN and a physician anesthesiologist, list your questions and concerns about pain management during labor.

2. Some pain management options could restrict your mobility. Your ability to get up and move around during labor is:

- Very important to you
- Somewhat important to you
- Not important to you

3. Months before delivery, discuss the pros and cons of the following options for managing labor pain with your OB-GYN and a physician anesthesiologist. After the consultations, note your preference for when or if to use each (“first choice,” “only in an emergency,” “never,” etc.).

- Epidural _____
- Spinal _____
- IV pain medicine _____
- General anesthesia _____
- Additional and complementary methods such as massage, breathing and visualization

Upon arrival at the hospital, immediately ask to see the physician anesthesiologist to discuss your choices.

4. Talk to the physician anesthesiologist about good options for pain management after delivery.

Other medical considerations

Labor and delivery usually proceed normally, but sometimes complications arise. It is best to discuss and consider your options in advance instead of having to consider them in the stress of the moment.

1. Talk to your OB-GYN or other health care provider in advance about each of the following. Ask about the circumstances under which each one might be necessary. Also ask about benefits, risks and alternatives. Then provide instructions for if and when you would want each of these options to be considered.

- **Episiotomy** – a surgical incision to enlarge the vaginal opening to help deliver a baby.
- **Forceps or vacuum extraction** – used to assist with a difficult vaginal delivery.
- **Cesarean delivery** – delivery of a baby by making incisions in the mother’s abdomen and uterus.
- **Medications and other methods** for initiating labor.

2. List any health conditions or medical issues the hospital or birthing center staff should be aware of, such as diabetes, high blood pressure or prior bad experiences with anesthesia.

3. Talk to your physician anesthesiologist about plans for emergency situations such as postpartum hemorrhage (bleeding) and preeclampsia (high blood pressure). Confirm emergency plans with your hospital or birthing center upon arrival.

4. Additional thoughts, questions, reminders and concerns

Learn more about preparing for labor and delivery at asahq.org/birth.