



Points to Cover in Your Birth Plan

- the kind of birthing method you will use
- the length of time you would like to stay at home once labor begins
- your feelings about having an enema
- your preference for vaginal exams during labor
- whether you want to eat or drink during labor
- whether you're willing to have an IV during labor
- whether you want to walk around or sit during labor
- whether you wish to shower or bathe during labor
- providing a place for your partner to sleep or rest during and immediately following labor
- the position you prefer to deliver in
 - who you want in the room with you
 - the kind of atmosphere you want to create: music, quiet, etc.
 - your feelings about pain medication and what you'll say when you've had enough
 - videotaping and photographing the birth
 - your partner cutting the umbilical cord
 - agreeing to episiotomy or trying to avoid it with perineal massage
- whether you want to hold the baby right after it's born or wait until it's cleaned
- how often you want the baby monitored (Discuss this with your healthcare provider in advance to find out what the hospital/caregiver policy is.)
- whether you'll breast-feed and when you'll start
- circumcision in the hospital
- whether you want the baby in the room with you
- how soon you want visitors

A Birth Plan

What Is It and Do You Need One?

During childbirth, you, your birth coach and your healthcare provider are a team. Working together, your goal is to deliver a healthy baby and ensure that the birth experience is a good one. A valuable communication tool is a birth plan. It can help you decide what's important to you during your labor and delivery. It also lets the medical staff know your feelings about drugs for pain and how often you wish to be examined or have your baby monitored.

BIRTH PLAN TIPS

- **Decide on the writing style your birth plan will be in: letter, outline with a heading for each subject, list, etc.**
- **Ask your birth instructor or healthcare provider for input.**
- **View your birth plan as a flexible guide, not a set of rules. Many mothers change their birth plans during labor.**
- **Remember to bring your birth plan with you when you're ready to give birth, and give copies to the medical staff.**