

❌ Too vague? You might not get the birth experience you actually want



**A Step-by-Step Guide to
Creating a Birth Plan That
Supports Your Choices—
Without Being Ignored**

HOW TO WRITE A BIRTH PLAN

That Actually Works



WHY MOST BIRTH PLANS FAIL

A birth plan is meant to help you feel prepared and communicate your preferences—but most people go about it the wrong way.

- ❌ Too long? Nurses won't read it.
- ❌ Too rigid? It sets you up for disappointment if things change.
- ❌ Too vague? You might not get the birth experience you actually want.

The key is writing a birth plan that's clear, flexible, and actually useful in real-life birth situations. This guide will show you exactly how to do that.



STEP 1: KNOW YOUR BIRTH PREFERENCES



Questions to Ask Yourself:

- Where do I want to give birth? (Hospital, birth center, home)
- Who do I want there? (Partner, doula, family, friends)
- How do I want to manage pain? (Epidural, nitrous oxide, natural techniques)
- What interventions am I comfortable with? (Induction, monitoring, assisted delivery)
- What are my preferences for pushing and delivery? (Positions, coaching, delayed cord clamping)
- What newborn procedures do I want (or not want)? (Eye ointment, Vitamin K, circumcision)

💡 Pro Tip: If you're not sure what you want, use our birth preferences worksheet (included in this guide)!



HOW TO WRITE A BIRTH PLAN

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✓ STEP 2: KEEP IT SHORT & EASY TO READ

✦ Your birth plan should be one page, max.

Why?

- ✓ Doctors & nurses don't have time to read essays.
- ✓ Bullet points & quick preferences are easier to follow.
- ✓ A shorter plan makes it more likely to be honored.

💡 Pro Tip: Use a bold, easy-to-read format (like the template in this guide) and keep your preferences clear and to the point.

✓ STEP 3: USE "IF, THEN" STATEMENTS FOR FLEXIBILITY

Birth doesn't always go as planned. Instead of making rigid demands, use "if, then" statements so you stay in control, no matter what happens.

✗ Instead of: "I do NOT want an epidural."

✓ Try: "I prefer to labor without pain medication, but if I request one, please help me understand my options first."

✗ Instead of: "I refuse all interventions."

✓ Try: "I would like to avoid interventions unless medically necessary. If one is recommended, I'd like to discuss risks, benefits, and alternatives before deciding."

HOW TO WRITE A BIRTH PLAN

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✓ STEP 4: CUSTOMIZE & PRINT YOUR BIRTH PLAN

Now that you understand the essentials, it's time to create your own customized birth plan.

✦ This guide includes:

- ✓ A step-by-step birth plan template (fillable & printable)
- ✓ Example birth plans (for hospital, birth center, & home birth)
- ✓ Quick-reference birth preferences checklist

✓ STEP 5: SHARE & DISCUSS YOUR PLAN IN ADVANCE

Your birth plan is only effective if your birth team knows about it.

✦ Who to Share It With:

- ✓ Your OB/midwife at a prenatal visit (ideally before 36 weeks)
- ✓ Your doula (if you have one)
- ✓ Your partner/support person (so they can advocate for you)
- ✓ The nurses or staff at the hospital or birth center

✦ Pro Tip: Pack two copies in your hospital bag—one for your nurse & one for your partner to reference.

Secrets to an Easier Birth:

5 Proven Strategies You Need to Know

Birth doesn't have to be a chaotic, painful, or scary experience. With the right knowledge and preparation, you can stack the odds in your favor for an easier birth. These five proven strategies help reduce pain, fear, and unnecessary interventions—and they work whether you're planning a natural birth, epidural, or even a C-section.



How to Work With Your Body for a Smoother, More Positive Birth Experience

SECRETS TO AN EASIER BIRTH:

5 Proven Strategies You Need to Know

HOW TO WORK WITH YOUR BODY FOR A SMOOTHER, MORE POSITIVE BIRTH EXPERIENCE

Birth doesn't have to be a chaotic, painful, or scary experience. With the right knowledge and preparation, you can stack the odds in your favor for an easier birth. These five proven strategies help reduce pain, fear, and unnecessary interventions—and they work whether you're planning a natural birth, epidural, or even a C-section.

✓ STRATEGY 1: GET BABY IN AN OPTIMAL POSITION

The position of your baby during labor can make all the difference.

♥ Why It Matters:

- ✓ A well-positioned baby = shorter labor & easier pushing.
- ✓ A poorly positioned baby = back labor, stalled progress & more interventions.

👤 How to Encourage a Good Position:

- ✓ Spend time on hands and knees (great for posterior babies).
- ✓ Avoid reclining positions (especially in the third trimester).
- ✓ Use spinning babies techniques to optimize baby's position.
- ✓ Pelvic tilts & deep squats can create more space.

💡 Pro Tip: If labor is slow, changing positions can help baby rotate!

SECRETS TO AN EASIER BIRTH: 5 Proven Strategies You Need to Know

✓ STRATEGY 2: WORK WITH CONTRACTIONS, NOT AGAINST THEM

Tension = more pain. The more you resist contractions, the harder labor feels.

✦ How to Work With Contractions:

- ✓ Breathe deeply instead of tensing up.
- ✓ Use low, deep vocalizations (moaning vs. screaming).
- ✓ Stay upright & mobile instead of lying on your back.
- ✓ Relax your jaw & hands (this helps the pelvic floor relax, too!).

✓ STRATEGY 3: MOVE YOUR BODY TO KEEP LABOR PROGRESSING

Lying in bed can slow labor and make contractions feel more painful.

✦ Better Movement Options:

- ✓ Walking or swaying during early labor.
- ✓ Squatting, lunging, or using a birth ball during active labor.
- ✓ Hands-and-knees or side-lying positions if you're tired but need progress.
- ✓ Using a peanut ball if you have an epidural.

✦ When to Switch Positions:

- ▶ If contractions slow down or get irregular.
- ▶ If back labor is intense (hands-and-knees can help!).
- ▶ If pushing is taking a long time (changing positions can make baby move down!).

💡 Pro Tip: Your pelvis moves differently in each position—try different ones to see what feels best!

SECRETS TO AN EASIER BIRTH:

5 Proven Strategies You Need to Know

✓ STRATEGY 4: AVOID THE “CASCADE OF INTERVENTIONS”

One small intervention often leads to more. Understanding this can help you make informed choices.

✦ The Cascade of Interventions Looks Like This:

▶ Induction → Intense Contractions → Epidural → Labor Stalls → Pitocin → More Stress on Baby → C-Section

✦ Ways to Reduce Unnecessary Interventions:

- ✓ Let labor start on its own (if safe).
- ✓ Try natural labor induction methods first (walking, sex, relaxation).
- ✓ If labor slows, use movement instead of Pitocin when possible.
- ✓ Ask questions before saying yes to interventions (Is this necessary? What are my options?).

💡 Pro Tip: Not all interventions are bad! The key is to understand the risks, benefits, and alternatives.

SECRETS TO AN EASIER BIRTH: 5 Proven Strategies You Need to Know

✓ STRATEGY 5: BUILD A STRONG SUPPORT TEAM

The #1 thing that improves birth outcomes? Having the right people supporting you.

✦ Who Should Be on Your Team?

- ✓ A provider who respects your choices (OB or midwife).
- ✓ A doula (proven to reduce C-section rates and improve birth experiences!).
- ✓ A partner who knows how to advocate for you in labor.
- ✓ Supportive family or friends (who don't bring fear or negativity).

✦ Why Support Matters:

- 👤 Continuous labor support reduces C-sections by 25-39%.
- 👤 Having a doula lowers the need for epidurals & Pitocin.
- 👤 A supportive birth team increases satisfaction with birth—no matter what happens!

✦ FINAL THOUGHTS: BIRTH IS UNPREDICTABLE, BUT PREPARATION HELPS

Even if things don't go exactly as planned, these 5 strategies can make labor and birth smoother, less painful, and more empowering.

✦ Which one will you focus on first?

The Newborn Survival Guide:

Everything No One Tells You

Bringing home a newborn is beautiful, exhausting, and overwhelming—all at once. You've spent so much time preparing for birth, but now what? This guide will help you survive and thrive in the first six weeks, so you can feel more confident, prepared, and less sleep-deprived.



Your First 6 Weeks with Baby— What to Expect & How to Make It Easier

THE NEWBORN SURVIVAL GUIDE:

Everything No One Tells You

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✓ WEEK 1: THE “WHAT JUST HAPPENED?” PHASE

✦ What to Expect:

- ✓ Your baby will sleep 14-18 hours a day—but in short bursts.
- ✓ Cluster feeding is NORMAL (yes, it feels non-stop).
- ✓ Newborns cry for all kinds of reasons (hungry, tired, gassy, **overstimulated**).
- ✓ Your emotions may feel all over the place.

✦ What Helps:

- ✓ Swaddling (mimics the womb, helps calm baby).
- ✓ White noise (blocks out sudden noises, promotes sleep).
- ✓ Wearing baby (a wrap or carrier can be a lifesaver).
- ✓ A postpartum support system (ask for help!).

💡 Pro Tip: It's okay if the first week feels like a blur. Survival mode is normal!

THE NEWBORN SURVIVAL GUIDE:

Everything No One Tells You

✓ WEEKS 2-3: THE “WHY WON’T MY BABY SLEEP?” PHASE

✦ What to Expect:

- ✓ Baby’s sleep is still all over the place (but there’s a pattern forming).
- ✓ Gas, reflux, and digestion issues can peak now.
- ✓ Some babies start “witching hour” fussiness in the evenings.
- ✓ Your sleep deprivation really kicks in.

✦ What Helps:

- ✓ Wake windows (too much awake time = overtired baby).
- ✓ Bicycle legs & tummy massage (helps baby pass gas).
- ✓ Feeding upright & burping well (reduces spit-up).
- ✓ Taking shifts with a partner (one person sleeps, the other handles baby).

💡 Pro Tip: At this stage, babies aren’t “bad sleepers”—they’re just newborns! Adjust expectations, not just sleep strategies.

THE NEWBORN SURVIVAL GUIDE:

Everything No One Tells You

✓ WEEKS 4-6: THE “SETTLING IN” PHASE

✦ What to Expect:

- ✓ Baby's digestive system is adjusting—you might see poop changes.
- ✓ Sleep patterns are more predictable (but still short stretches).
- ✓ Breastfeeding or bottle feeding gets easier.
- ✓ You might start feeling more like yourself again.

✦ What Helps:

- ✓ Tracking sleep & feed patterns (helps notice baby's natural rhythm).
- ✓ Trying a gentle bedtime routine (even just dim lights & a song).
- ✓ Getting outside daily (fresh air helps both of you!).
- ✓ Connecting with other parents (it helps to not feel alone).

💡 Pro Tip: If sleep isn't improving, revisit wake windows & feeding amounts. Adjustments make a huge difference!

THE NEWBORN SURVIVAL GUIDE:

Everything No One Tells You

COMMON NEWBORN CHALLENGES & HOW TO HANDLE THEM

1. Cluster Feeding

- ✓ Normal in growth spurts (especially weeks 2, 4, and 6).
- ✓ Nurse or bottle-feed on demand—it helps boost supply.
- ✓ If overwhelmed, switch sides often or take short breaks.

2. Newborn Gas & Fussiness

- ✓ Try bicycle legs, tummy massage, or babywearing.
- ✓ Adjust feeding positions & burp baby well.
- ✓ If bottle-feeding, check for slow-flow nipples to prevent gulping air.

3. Baby Won't Sleep in the Bassinet

- ✓ Try warming the sheet slightly before laying them down.
- ✓ Put baby down drowsy but awake (not fully asleep).
- ✓ Try different sleep surfaces (bassinet, crib, bedside co-sleeper).

4. Night & Day Confusion

- ✓ Keep daytime bright & active, nighttime dark & quiet.
- ✓ Limit long naps during the day to encourage better night sleep.
- ✓ Use white noise at night for consistency.

5. You're Completely Overwhelmed

- ✓ Ask for help—you don't need to do this alone.
- ✓ Outsource what you can (meals, cleaning, errands).
- ✓ Take things one feed, one nap, one day at a time.

 Pro Tip: There is no perfect way to do this. Your baby is learning, and so are you!

The Baby Sleep Cheat Sheet:

What to Expect & How to Get More Rest

Newborn sleep is nothing like adult sleep—and that's why it feels so exhausting! The good news? Once you understand how baby sleep actually works, you can make small changes that lead to more rest for everyone.

A Simple Guide to Understanding Newborn Sleep & Avoiding Common Mistakes



THE BABY SLEEP CHEAT SHEET: What to Expect & How to Get More Rest

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING NEWBORN SLEEP & AVOIDING COMMON MISTAKES

Newborn sleep is nothing like adult sleep—and that's why it feels so exhausting! The good news? Once you understand how baby sleep actually works, you can make small changes that lead to more rest for everyone.

This cheat sheet will help you:

- ✓ Understand newborn sleep cycles (and why they wake so often).
- ✓ Avoid common sleep mistakes that make nights harder.
- ✓ Get better rest—without sleep training.

✓ THE TRUTH ABOUT NEWBORN SLEEP (WHAT NO ONE TELLS YOU)

- ♥ Newborns sleep a lot—but in short bursts.
- 👤 Average sleep per 24 hours: 14-17 hours
- 👤 Longest stretch at night: 2-4 hours (if you're lucky!)
- 👤 Nap length: 30 minutes to 2 hours
- ♥ Newborn sleep is different because:
 - ✓ Their sleep cycles are shorter (only 40-50 minutes).
 - ✓ They wake easily because light sleep dominates (this is protective!).
 - ✓ Their circadian rhythm isn't developed yet (they don't know day from night).

💡 Pro Tip: Expect frequent wake-ups in the first 8 weeks. Newborns wake easily because their bodies are designed for survival.

THE BABY SLEEP CHEAT SHEET:

What to Expect & How to Get More Rest

✓ WAKE WINDOWS: THE KEY TO AVOIDING AN OVERTIRED BABY

Newborns can't stay awake for long! If they do, they become overtired—and sleep gets worse.

✦ General Newborn Wake Windows (0-12 Weeks):

✓ 0-4 Weeks: 35-45 minutes

✓ 4-8 Weeks: 45-60 minutes

✓ 8-12 Weeks: 60-75 minutes

✦ Signs Your Baby is Overtired:

👤 Fussy & irritable after feeding

👤 Rubbing eyes or pulling ears

👤 Sudden "wired" energy (fighting sleep)

💡 Pro Tip: If baby is overtired, soothe them with motion (rocking, bouncing, babywearing) to help them settle.

THE BABY SLEEP CHEAT SHEET: What to Expect & How to Get More Rest

✓ WHY DOES MY BABY ONLY NAP FOR 30 MINUTES?

Short naps are normal in newborns—but if baby is waking miserable, they may need help connecting sleep cycles.

✚ How to Help Baby Nap Longer:

- ✓ Try contact naps (babies sleep longer when held).
- ✓ Use white noise (blocks out sudden noises).
- ✓ Keep the room dark (blackout curtains help!).
- ✓ Extend the nap (gently rock baby back to sleep).

💡 Pro Tip: Not all short naps need fixing—if baby wakes happy, they got enough sleep!

THE BABY SLEEP CHEAT SHEET:

What to Expect & How to Get More Rest

✓ WHEN WILL BABY SLEEP LONGER AT NIGHT?

✿ Most babies won't sleep through the night until at least 3-6 months.

👤 Around 6-8 weeks, night sleep starts getting longer.

👤 By 3 months, many babies get a 4-6 hour stretch.

👤 Full "sleeping through the night" (8+ hours) isn't expected until 6-12 months.

✿ How to Encourage Longer Night Stretches:

✓ Expose baby to daylight during the day.

✓ Keep nighttime feedings quiet & low-stimulation.

✓ Make daytime naps consistent, but don't let baby oversleep.

💡 Pro Tip: If baby's longest sleep stretch happens during the day, try waking them gently after 2-2.5 hours to encourage a longer stretch at night.

THE BABY SLEEP CHEAT SHEET:

What to Expect & How to Get More Rest

✓ SAFE SLEEP GUIDELINES (EVEN IF YOU'RE ROOM-SHARING OR CO-SLEEPING)

✦ The Basics of Safe Sleep:

- ✓ Baby sleeps on their back.
- ✓ Firm, flat mattress (no pillows or bumpers).
- ✓ Nothing in the crib but baby (no blankets, toys, or loose items).
- ✓ Room-sharing is recommended for at least 6 months.

✦ If You're Planning to Co-Sleep (Know the Risks & Guidelines):

- ✓ Baby should be on a firm mattress (not a couch or chair).
- ✓ No heavy blankets or pillows near baby.
- ✓ Parents should be non-smokers & sober.
- ✓ Breastfeeding mothers naturally sleep more in sync with baby.

💡 Pro Tip: Even if you don't plan to co-sleep, knowing safe bed-sharing guidelines can be helpful in case baby won't sleep alone.

THE BABY SLEEP CHEAT SHEET: What to Expect & How to Get More Rest

THE BIGGEST NEWBORN SLEEP MISTAKES TO AVOID

- ❌ Keeping baby awake too long (“tire them out” strategy backfires).
- ❌ Not watching baby’s sleepy cues (waiting too long to put them down).
- ❌ Thinking you can “spoil” baby by holding them too much.
- ❌ Expecting a newborn to sleep like an older baby.

💡 Pro Tip: Go with the flow, follow wake windows, and adjust expectations—your baby is still figuring things out!

The 5 Biggest Mistakes

New Parents Make
(& How to Avoid Them)

The newborn phase is a huge adjustment. No matter how much you prepare, there are some things you only learn through experience. But what if you could skip the trial-and-error and avoid the biggest mistakes that make postpartum harder than it needs to be? These 5 common mistakes trip up even the most prepared parents—but now you'll know how to avoid them!

**What Every New
Parent Wishes
They Knew
Before Baby
Arrived**



THE 5 BIGGEST MISTAKES New Parents Make (& How to Avoid Them)

WHAT EVERY NEW PARENT WISHES THEY KNEW BEFORE BABY ARRIVED

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✓ MISTAKE #1: NOT SETTING UP A POSTPARTUM SUPPORT TEAM

New parents often focus all their energy on birth prep—but postpartum recovery lasts much longer than labor.

✦ Why It's a Problem:

👤 You're physically healing from birth, sleep-deprived, and caring for a tiny human.

👤 Trying to do it all alone leads to exhaustion, burnout, and overwhelm.

👤 Partners struggle too—they need support just as much as you do.

✦ How to Avoid It:

✓ Use the "Three Circles" method to organize your support system.

✓ Ask for help before baby arrives. People want to help, but they don't always know how.

✓ Accept that postpartum isn't a solo mission—build your village early!

THE 5 BIGGEST MISTAKES New Parents Make (& How to Avoid Them)

✓ MISTAKE #2: ASSUMING NEWBORN SLEEP WILL “JUST WORK ITSELF OUT”

Newborn sleep is completely different from adult sleep, and if you don't know what's normal, it can feel really frustrating.

✦ Why It's a Problem:

- 🧑 Parents expect babies to “sleep through the night” too soon.
- 🧑 Keeping baby awake longer doesn't make them sleep longer—it backfires.
- 🧑 Exhausted parents start desperately searching for solutions that don't actually work.

✦ How to Avoid It:

- ✓ Learn newborn sleep basics (wake windows, sleep cycles, and realistic expectations).
- ✓ Set up a sleep-friendly environment (dark room, white noise, safe sleep space).
- ✓ Remember: Short naps and frequent wake-ups are NORMAL at first.

💡 Pro Tip: If baby is overtired, they will fight sleep harder. Follow wake windows and watch for sleepy cues instead of the clock.

THE 5 BIGGEST MISTAKES New Parents Make (& How to Avoid Them)

✓ MISTAKE #3: NOT UNDERSTANDING HOW TO FEED A NEWBORN

Whether you're breastfeeding, bottle-feeding, or combo-feeding, there's a learning curve.

✦ Why It's a Problem:

- 👤 Many parents think breastfeeding should "just happen" naturally—it often doesn't.
- 👤 Formula feeding parents struggle with how much & how often to feed.
- 👤 Growth spurts & cluster feeding can feel like something is "wrong" when it's actually normal.

✦ How to Avoid It:

- ✓ Learn about normal newborn feeding behaviors before baby arrives.
- ✓ If breastfeeding, get support early (lactation consultant, online resources).
- ✓ If formula feeding, track intake & understand normal feeding patterns.

💡 Pro Tip: Newborns eat constantly in the first few weeks. It's exhausting, but it helps them grow—and feeding patterns change quickly!

THE 5 BIGGEST MISTAKES New Parents Make (& How to Avoid Them)

✓ MISTAKE #4: EXPECTING TO “BOUNCE BACK” TOO SOON

Postpartum recovery is not just 6 weeks—your body and mind take months to fully heal.

✚ Why It's a Problem:

- 🧑‍🤝‍🧑 The pressure to “snap back” makes new parents feel like they're failing.
- 🧑‍🤝‍🧑 People underestimate how long postpartum bleeding, soreness, and fatigue last.
- 🧑‍🤝‍🧑 Mental health struggles (like postpartum anxiety & depression) often go unnoticed.

✚ How to Avoid It:

- ✓ Give yourself permission to rest & recover—without guilt.
- ✓ Prioritize self-care (nutrition, hydration, movement when ready).
- ✓ Know the signs of postpartum anxiety & depression—and don't wait to get help.

💡 Pro Tip: Your body just created a human. Healing takes time—honor the process instead of rushing it.

THE 5 BIGGEST MISTAKES New Parents Make (& How to Avoid Them)

✓ MISTAKE #5: IGNORING YOUR RELATIONSHIP & MENTAL HEALTH

Having a baby completely shifts your relationship dynamic. Many couples struggle because they don't talk about expectations before birth.

✦ Why It's a Problem:

- 👤 Unspoken resentment builds when one person feels they're doing more.
- 👤 Partners feel disconnected in the chaos of newborn life.
- 👤 Many new parents don't realize how common postpartum anxiety & mood swings are.

✦ How to Avoid It:

- ✓ Have a real conversation with your partner about expectations before birth.
- ✓ Prioritize small moments of connection (even just a 10-minute check-in).
- ✓ Know that mood swings, intrusive thoughts, and anxiety are common postpartum.

💡 Pro Tip: It's okay to not love every moment of new parenthood. Take care of your mental health just as much as your baby's needs.

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Contraction Timer & Labor Guide

What to Do at Every
Stage of Labor

When labor starts, everything feels real. But how do you know when it's actually time to go to the hospital or birth center? This guide will teach you how to time contractions correctly, what to expect at each stage of labor, and how to stay in control every step of the way.



How to Time
Contractions,
Know When to Go
to the Hospital &
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CONTRACTION TIMER & LABOR GUIDE: What to Do at Every Stage of Labor

HOW TO TIME CONTRACTIONS, KNOW WHEN TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL & STAY IN CONTROL

When labor starts, everything feels real. But how do you know when it's actually time to go to the hospital or birth center?

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✓ HOW TO TIME CONTRACTIONS THE RIGHT WAY

✦ What Are Contractions?

- ✓ Your uterus is tightening to help move your baby down and open your cervix.
- ✓ They start mild & irregular but get longer, stronger & closer together as labor progresses.
- ✓ Timing contractions helps determine if labor is real or just practice contractions (Braxton Hicks).

✦ How to Time Contractions:

- ✓ Start the timer at the beginning of one contraction.
- ✓ Stop the timer when the contraction ends.
- ✓ Write down (or use an app) how long the contraction lasted.
- ✓ Time from the start of one contraction to the start of the next (not from end to start).

CONTRACTION TIMER & LABOR GUIDE:

What to Do at Every Stage of Labor

✓ WHEN TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL OR BIRTH CENTER

💡 The 4-1-1 Rule:

- 👤 Contractions are 4 minutes apart
- 👤 Each contraction lasts 1 full minute
- 👤 **This pattern continues for 1 hour**

💡 Exceptions (Go In Sooner If...):

- 👤 Your water breaks and fluid is green or brown (possible meconium).
- 👤 You're bleeding like a period (light spotting is normal).
- 👤 You feel intense pressure or the urge to push.
- 👤 You have a high-risk pregnancy (ask your provider about early signs to watch for).

💡 Pro Tip: If contractions suddenly get very strong and close together, go in sooner!

✓ THE 3 STAGES OF LABOR & WHAT TO DO AT EACH ONE

📌 Stage 1: Early & Active Labor (0-7 cm Dilated)

✓ What to Expect:

- ✓ Contractions start mild & irregular, then become stronger & closer together.
- ✓ Mucus plug & bloody show may appear.
- ✓ Water may break (but doesn't always).

✓ What Helps:

- ✓ Stay home as long as possible (early labor can last hours).
- ✓ Move around (walking, birth ball, swaying helps labor progress).
- ✓ Use breathing techniques, warm baths & distractions.

📌 Stage 2: Transition & Pushing (7-10 cm Dilated)

✓ What to Expect:

- ✓ Intense contractions (1-2 minutes apart).
- ✓ You may feel nausea, shaking, or overwhelming pressure.
- ✓ Urge to push (only push if fully dilated!).

✓ What Helps:

- ✓ Stay focused on breathing (slow exhales help control intensity).
- ✓ Try different pushing positions (upright, hands & knees, side-lying).
- ✓ Work with your contractions—don't fight them.

Stage 3: Delivering the Placenta

✓ What to Expect:

- ✓ After baby is born, you'll have a few mild contractions.
- ✓ The placenta detaches & is delivered (usually within 5-30 minutes).

💡 Pro Tip: Delayed cord clamping is an option—talk to your provider about your preferences.

CONTRACTION TIMER & LABOR GUIDE: What to Do at Every Stage of Labor

✓ THE BIGGEST MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE WHEN TIMING CONTRACTIONS

- ⊘ Timing contractions too early & going in too soon (leading to being sent home).
- ⊘ Focusing on every single contraction instead of the overall pattern.
- ⊘ Forgetting that emotions are a key sign of labor progression (if you can still talk & joke, you're likely not in active labor yet).

💡 Pro Tip: Delayed cord clamping is an option—talk to your provider about your preferences.

How to Advocate for Yourself in Pregnancy & Birth

One of the biggest regrets parents have after birth is not speaking up for themselves. Many people go along with what they're told—only to realize later they had options they didn't even know about. This guide will teach you how to advocate for yourself in pregnancy and birth, ask the right questions, and ensure you're an active participant in every decision.



5 Powerful Ways to Advocate for Yourself in the Birth Room

HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF in Pregnancy & Birth

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS, MAKE INFORMED CHOICES & FEEL EMPOWERED IN THE BIRTH ROOM

One of the biggest regrets parents have after birth is not speaking up for themselves. Many people go along with what they're told—only to realize later they had options they didn't even know about.

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✓ UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS IN PREGNANCY & BIRTH

✦ You Have the Right to:

- ✓ Say "yes" or "no" to any procedure or intervention.
- ✓ Ask for more time before making a decision (unless it's a true emergency).
- ✓ Decline routine interventions (like cervical checks or IV fluids) if they aren't necessary.
- ✓ Change providers if yours isn't respecting your choices.
- ✓ Have a birth support person with you (this includes doulas in most hospitals).

💡 Pro Tip: If something doesn't feel right, you can always ask for a second opinion or request a different provider.

HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF in Pregnancy & Birth

✓ HOW TO ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS (THE BRAIN METHOD)

When a provider suggests an intervention (like induction, Pitocin, breaking your water, or a C-section), don't just say yes automatically.

✦ Use the BRAIN acronym to ask better questions:

- ✓ B – Benefits: What are the benefits of this intervention?
- ✓ R – Risks: What are the risks involved?
- ✓ A – Alternatives: Are there other options?
- ✓ I – Intuition: What does my gut tell me?
- ✓ N – Nothing: What happens if we do nothing for now?

💡 Pro Tip: Many interventions are optional—asking questions ensures you make the right choice for your birth.

HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF in Pregnancy & Birth

✓ COMMON BIRTH INTERVENTIONS & WHAT TO ASK BEFORE SAYING YES

✦ 1. Induction (Starting Labor with Medication or Breaking Water)

👤 What to Ask:

- ✓ Is this medically necessary, or can I wait?
- ✓ What are the risks of inducing vs. waiting for labor to start naturally?
- ✓ Can I try natural induction methods first?

✦ 2. Epidural & Pain Relief Options

👤 What to Ask:

- ✓ What are my pain relief options besides an epidural?
- ✓ If I get an epidural, how might it affect my labor?
- ✓ Can I still move & change positions after getting it?

✦ 5. C-Section Recommendations

👤 What to Ask:

- ✓ Is this an emergency, or do I have time to try other options?
- ✓ What happens if I wait a little longer?
- ✓ Can I request delayed cord clamping & immediate skin-to-skin after delivery?

✦ 3. Continuous Monitoring vs. Intermittent Monitoring

👤 What to Ask:

- ✓ Can I have intermittent monitoring so I can move freely?
- ✓ Is continuous monitoring medically necessary in my case?

✦ 4. Pushing & Delivery Positions

👤 What to Ask:

- ✓ Can I push in a position other than on my back?
- ✓ How long do I have to push before other interventions are suggested?

💡 Pro Tip: The way you phrase your questions matters! Instead of asking "Do I have to do this?" try "What are my options?"

HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF in Pregnancy & Birth

✓ 5 POWERFUL WAYS TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF IN THE BIRTH ROOM

1 Bring a Doula or Well-Informed Support Person

- ✓ Having a doula reduces C-sections, unnecessary interventions & birth trauma.
- ✓ Even if you don't have a doula, your partner can advocate for you—but they need to know how.

2 Communicate Your Birth Preferences Clearly

- ✓ Write a simple birth plan (one page, bullet points).
- ✓ Use "if, then" statements to show flexibility while maintaining preferences.

3 If You're Feeling Pressured, Ask for a Minute

- ✓ Unless it's a true emergency, you can ask for time to think before agreeing.
- ✓ Example: "I hear what you're saying—can I have a few minutes to talk this over with my partner?"

4 Trust Your Gut

- ✓ If something feels wrong or unnecessary, speak up!
- ✓ Your provider should respect your concerns, not dismiss them.

5 Know That You Can Say No (Or Ask for an Alternative)

- ✓ You do not have to accept routine interventions just because they're common.
- ✓ If you're unsure, ask "Can I wait a little longer?"

💡 Pro Tip: Your birth team works for YOU—not the other way around. It's okay to advocate for yourself!