

Tips for your

BIRTH PLAN

... better referred
to as 'preferences'!

(full details on the accompanying video)

YOUR BIRTH HOPES & WISHES

Births don't always go as expected so always try and remember that your preferences can easily change during labour; you can always change your mind ... this is YOUR birth!

Your plan is your way of telling everyone involved what you would like to happen, in the ideal scenario. It may also help you feel calmer in the run up to the big day if you feel prepared, in charge of things and are organised.

Keep your list of preferences as simple and brief as possible; your midwife is a busy lady but the more she knows about your wishes the better care she can give to you. Your midwife is your friend!

It might be worth discussing your birth plan with your birthing partner if you have one, so that they can act as your advocate during the birth if needed.



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- ♥ **HOSPITAL, BIRTH CENTRE OR HOME BIRTH** - which are available / do you prefer?
- ♥ **BIRTH PARTNER** - who would you like to be there with you for the birth?
- ♥ **WATER BIRTH** - you must let the hospital know as soon as labour starts
- ♥ **MOBILITY** - would you like to stay active as long as possible?
- ♥ **CLOTHES** - would you like to give birth in a hospital gown or your own clothes?
- ♥ **MUSIC** - are you bringing your own, perhaps a playlist of favourite songs?
- ♥ **DIETARY REQUIREMENTS** - are you vegetarian, gluten free, etc.?
- ♥ **ASSISTED DELIVERY** - research the different techniques and options that maybe used if needed
- ♥ **PAIN RELIEF** - check with your midwife or hospital what they have available as all regions vary. Options include water birth, gas and air, hypnobirthing, TENS machine, epidural, spinal block, morphine, pethidine, homeopathy, aromatherapy.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT CONTINUED ...

- ♥ **RELIGIOUS OR CULTURAL NEEDS** - if there are any religious practices needed, or if English isn't your first language, then let your midwife know.
- ♥ **MEDICAL CONDITIONS** - it would really help your midwife if she knew in advance about any medical issues or disabilities which may need specialist care.
- ♥ **EPISIOTOMY** - would you prefer one if offered or needed?
- ♥ **ARTIFICIAL RUPTURE OF MEMBRANES** - would you like your waters broken for you?
- ♥ **CAESAREAN SECTION** - the hospital may offer a range of options that may enable a more intimate, relaxed and special delivery.
- ♥ **STUDENTS** - would you mind them being present?
- ♥ **INDUCTION** - do you have any preferences if needed (check what is available locally)?
- ♥ **SEX OF BABY** - would you like to see for yourself or let your partner tell you?
- ♥ **PLACENTA** - would you like an injection of syntocinon following birth to speed up delivery of the placenta or leave it to happen naturally?

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT CONTINUED ...

- ♥ **SKIN TO SKIN** - would you like skin to skin contact with your baby straight away?
- ♥ **VITAMIN K** - this is an option that you will be offered for your baby post bith (it helps their blood to clot); it would be worth reading up on it to see what you'd prefer.
- ♥ **FEEDING** - do you have any plans for breast or formula feeding?
- ♥ **ANTENATAL EXPRESSING** - is this available locally and would you like to do it?
- ♥ **UMBILICAL CORD** - Any special requests as to who's going to cut it or whether you would like delayed cord clamping? *(see note below*)*
- ♥ **SUPPORT AFTER THE BIRTH** - who will help and who will collect you from hospital?

** Delayed clamping can have great health benefits; the World Health Organisation states that the optimal time to clamp the cord for all babies is when the circulation in the cord has ceased and it is flat and pulseless; which is approximately 3 minutes or more after birth. Research has shown that when we delay cord clamping a baby receives up to 30% more of the fetal-placental blood volume than it would otherwise have done.*

**OTHER FREE DOWNLOADS THAT MAY BE OF HELP TO YOU ARE:
LABOUR TIPS, PREGNANCY TIPS AND WHAT TO PACK FOR THE BIRTH.**