

Labour & Birth Guide

FOR FAMILIES AND CARE PROVIDERS

This labour and birth guide is meant to help you talk about the coming birth of your baby. It is also for your care providers to understand how you want to be treated and the things that matter most to you. These are some suggested topics to explore with your birth partner, support people and care providers.

Keep in mind that it's helpful to remain flexible and open to changes as labour and birth progress.

How to use the Labour Birth Guide

Think about and discuss the questions on page 2 with your partner, support people, and doula. Fill in the Labour & Birth Guide form (pages 3 and 4) and bring to your care provider to discuss and get input. Make 2 final copies. Leave one with them. When you are in labour bring your copy and give it to your providers.

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LABOUR & BIRTH

Who would you like to have with you?

Partner, friends, relatives, doula –it’s your decision.

How do you plan to cope with pain during labour?

Learn about natural methods for dealing with the pain of labour and/or about the drugs available to you. Think about when and how you would like these options offered to you.

What matters to you when pushing?

Learn about different pushing positions: squatting, supported squatting, kneeling, side-lying, on all fours, leaning back, sitting on the toilet or birth-stool. Do you want to try self-directed pushing, or would you prefer to get direction right away?

What matters to you about the physical space and mood? Think about what makes you most relaxed or motivated: Privacy and modesty, music or quiet, dimmed or bright lights, being allowed to labour on your own time or getting lots of encouragement.

How can you make your experience personal?

What could you do to make the birth, or birthing room have a personal touch? Personal objects, your own clothes, a picture... Do you have any special cultural ceremonies or celebrations you would like to include in your birth experience? Do you want your birth documented in pictures or video? Do you need extra support such as a translator?

AFTER BIRTH

What happens once baby arrives?

Talk about what will happen with your baby after the birth such as skin-to-skin contact, baby’s checkup, weight, length, and treatments. Think about the timing of these things, and when you would prefer they are offered. Who should announce the sex of the baby?

What treatments are offered to baby?

Discuss with your care provider routine treatments such as antibiotic eye ointment and vitamin K injection or other treatments recommended for your baby.

How would you like to birth the placenta?

Discuss options surrounding the birth of the placenta. Do you want to keep the placenta? For births at BC Women’s Hospital: Do you want to donate to the Canadian Cord Blood Bank? If yes please download a consent form, sign it and bring with you. More information: <https://blood.ca/en/cordblood>

How would you like to have the umbilical cord cut?

Is it important to you that a certain person be able to cut the cord? Discuss the timing of clamping and cutting the cord.

How are you going to feed baby?

Are you planning on breastfeeding? Do you need extra help with learning how to breastfeed? Do you have a different feeding plan such as using formula?

Do you want visitors?

Think about whether you would like visitors after the birth and who they might be. Do you want them to come early, later, or not at all? Remember to balance visiting with your need for rest and getting to know your baby.

INTERVENTIONS & UNEXPECTED EVENTS

What are your options for continuous monitoring?

If you need continuous monitoring of your baby’s heartbeat, know the options available to you. Is it important that you are able to be mobile, or go in the tub or shower?

What if your labour is long or slow (sometimes called non-progressive labour)?

What natural methods are available to try? What medications, such as oxytocin, might be offered? Discuss the options with your care provider.

What if you need an assisted birth?

Ask/learn about vacuum assisted and forceps procedures.

What if you need a caesarian?

You can talk about your options with your care provider in case you need to have a caesarian birth.

- Can you have medication and also be awake?
- Can you have your partner and/or your support person with you in the operating room?
- Can you and/or your partner hold the baby and have skin-to-skin contact in the operating room?

What if your baby needs special care after birth?

Think about how much you would like to be involved in the care of your baby if they need special care. Would you like to try breastfeeding if possible? Do you want to have skin-to-skin contact shortly after birth if possible?

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SUMMARY FOR FAMILIES AND CARE PROVIDERS

This guide will help the care team to understand your general wishes for labour and birth. You can give this guide to your care provider and bring a copy with you to give to your nurse if you are cared-for in hospital.

DATE OF BIRTH

LEGAL NAME

PREFERRED NAME

CURRENT MEDICATION(S):

ALLERGIES:

LABOUR & BIRTH

Support people I would like to have with me:

Birth partner: _____

Doula: _____

Comfort measures I would like to try during labour:

Walking, rocking, leaning

Labour ball

Tub and/or Shower

Heat and/or Ice

Massage

TENS machine

Other: _____

When pushing, I would like:

To try a variety of pushing positions

Have help or direction with pushing

Self-directed pushing

Other: _____

Preferences for pain medication:

Only if I ask, I do not want any kind of pain medication offered to me

Offer if I appear not to be coping

Offer as soon as possible

Options I would like to consider:

Nitrous oxide (laughing gas/Entonox)

Pain medication such as morphine or fentanyl

Epidural

Other: _____

I wish to donate to the Canadian Cord Blood Bank

Other requests for labour or birth (personal, religious, cultural or language):

AFTER BIRTH

I would like baby to have skin-to-skin contact with me or my partner for the first hour.

If possible, I would like _____ to cut the umbilical cord at the best time

Feeding baby

I plan to breastfeed

Other feeding plan: _____

I would like my baby to have:

Antibiotic eye ointment

Vitamin K injection

Preferences for baby or birth of the placenta:

INTERVENTIONS & UNEXPECTED EVENTS

If unexpected events occur, it is important to me:

- To be included in all decisions
- To have my partner included in all decisions
- Other: _____

If continuous monitoring is needed:

- I prefer to be mobile
- I would like to use the shower or bath if possible.

If my labour is prolonged I would like:

- To try natural methods as long as possible
- To be offered medication as soon as the labour slows and if it is safe

In the case of assisted birth (vacuum, forceps or Caesarian birth):

- I have a strong preference for: _____
- I will discuss the best method with my care-providers and will decide at the time

My wishes in the case of a caesarian birth:

If the baby is sick and needs special care, I would like:

- Skin-to-skin care of baby if possible
 - Help to start expressing/pumping milk
 - To be involved in baby's care as much as possible
 - Other: _____
- _____
- _____

NOTES
