

Your Guide to Creating Your Personalized Birth Plan

This guide is a comprehensive resource for developing a customized birth plan, covering recommended preparations, key labor and delivery options, pain management, newborn care preferences, and postpartum considerations.

Getting Started

We recommend:

- Take a childbirth preparation class. Riverside offers classes and educational resources regarding childbirth, newborn care and breastfeeding. See up to date class offerings on Riverside's website.
- Read reputable books and/or websites about labor and birth.
- Spend time thinking about your own preferences and discuss your thoughts with your support person(s).
- Share a draft with your OB provider at your next appointment and discuss it with them.
- Revise your plan as needed.

While in labor, remember to keep an open mind. We will do our best to honor your wishes while keeping you and your baby safe. By educating yourself in advance, we hope you will feel empowered to make the best choices for you and your baby.

What You Can Expect

Our goal is for every birthing person to have a safe and healthy birth. Our team at Riverside routinely provides the following exceptional patient-centered care. Alterations in routine care will be discussed when necessary in order to keep you and your baby safe.

- Continuous nursing care during labor
- Immediate skin-to-skin bonding at delivery
- Delayed cord clamping
- Intermittent fetal monitoring during early labor for low-risk pregnancies if medically appropriate
- Wireless devices for fetal monitoring to allow freedom of movement
- Pain management options; including natural support, shower, IV medication and/or epidural
- Clear liquids are provided; however, may restrict solid foods if medically necessary
- Lactation and breastfeeding support from board-certified consultants and trained nurses
- All care and medications are explained before they occur
- Episiotomies are avoided unless medically needed
- Pediatric hospitalist available 24/7 for newborn care when needed
- Professional newborn photography session
- Complimentary meal tray for one support person throughout stay

* Limit of 2-3 support persons while in labor and delivery. Doulas are welcomed as one of your support persons.

* Only one support person allowed in operating room for cesarean birth

*No children under the age of 18 permitted in the labor and delivery rooms

Building a birth plan can be overwhelming. Allow us to help walk you through some of the options to consider for your labor and delivery. Our desire is for you to feel encouraged, educated and empowered to create a personalized birth experience. Once you have considered your personal preferences complete the attached “My Birth Plan” document and review it with your OB physician at one of your next prenatal appointments. Be sure to write down any questions you may have for your OB physician.

Special Considerations:

- English is not my first language, I will need an interpreter
- I will need a sign language interpreter
- I have special dietary requirements
- I or my support person have special needs
- I would like certain religious/cultural customs to be observed
- _____
- _____

Start by considering who you want to have with you during your labor and delivery experience. Choose people who will help comfort and encourage you throughout the labor process. Think about what kind of environment will help you to feel the most at ease. The following are suggestions of visitation and environmental considerations to discuss with your support person(s).

Visitation/Environmental:

- I would like to allow visitors to come and go
- I only want visitors during early stages of labor
- No visitors except for my support person(s)
- Do not allow these people: _____
- My doula will be present during my labor and delivery
- I prefer bright/dim lighting
- I would like a quiet, peaceful environment while in labor
- I would like to bring a pillow and/or blanket from home
- I plan to bring my own labor gown (needs to allow access for fetal monitoring)

Pain in Labor:

Pain is an individual experience. We are here to help you effectively cope with the discomforts of labor. Throughout your labor and postpartum care, you will be asked about your level of pain. We typically use a 0 to 10 scale, with “0” being no pain and “10” being the very worst pain you can imagine. We encourage you to think about your pain tolerance level so that we may more accurately assess your pain status and help you in increasing your overall comfort. We suggest for you to utilize all available comfort measures throughout the birth process to help you have a more satisfying birthing experience.

Remember: Labor “P-A-I-N” is Purposeful – alerts and causes labor progress, Anticipated – we expect pain in labor, Intermittent – it comes and goes throughout the labor process, Normal – pain is a normal part of the labor process.

Comfort Measures:

It is always best to plan ahead and practice using comfort techniques in advance. This way you will be prepared to utilize these comfort measures before the pain of labor begins. Try out a variety of techniques to find which you prefer and then discuss and practice them with your support person(s). The following is a list of some of the options to consider.

- Walking
 - Position changes
 - Massage
 - Counter-pressure
 - Relaxation techniques
 - Meditation
 - Visualization
 - Breathing Exercises
 - Warm Shower
 - Music (may use personal Bluetooth devices)
 - Aromatherapy (will need to bring supplies from home)
 - Birthing ball*
 - Peanut ball*
- (* Riverside provided)

Now let's move on to the labor process. Consider the following options and discuss them with your support person(s) and your OB provider. This will help to guide you in creating a tentative plan for your labor and delivery. Remember, unexpected things can happen and changes may need to be made to allow for the safest delivery possible.

Labor:

Unless medically necessary, elective induction of labor cannot be initiated until at least 39 weeks gestation.

- I would like to allow labor to begin on its own
- I would consider induction of labor if applicable
- I prefer as few cervical exams as possible
- I prefer to check dilation regularly so I know how labor is progressing
- I would like to discuss delivery options after a previous cesarean section with my OB provider

There may be periods when labor slows down or stalls. Your provider may discuss options to encourage labor to progress.

- I would like to try walking and/or changing positions to help labor progress
- I want to allow my bag of water to break on its own
- I would like my care provider to break my bag of water
- If necessary, I would like to discuss the use of medication to increase the strength or frequency of contractions

Pain Management Options:

Remember, you can change your mind at any point during labor.

- I prefer natural childbirth (no pain medications or epidural)
- Please do not offer medications or epidural to me. I will ask for them if needed.
- I am considering IV medication and/or an epidural, I will decide when I am in labor
- I would like to use IV pain medication
- I would like an epidural

Vaginal Birth:

- I prefer to avoid an episiotomy unless it is necessary
- I would like delayed cord clamping
- I would like my support person to cut the baby's cord
- I would like my baby placed on my chest right after birth for skin to skin

Cesarean Birth:

- I would like to be in the operating room with me. (limit 1 person)
- I would like the drape lowered so I can see my baby right after delivery
- I would like delayed cord clamping
- I would like my support person to hold the baby after delivery if I am not able to
- I would like my support person to stay with me while I am in the operating room
- I would like my support person to go with baby to the nursery

Placenta and Cord Blood

- I plan to keep my placenta for my own private use if my care provider doesn't order further testing (Note: if you are keeping your placenta, someone will need to pick it up as soon as possible after delivery and it will need to be refrigerated. Placentas are disposed of 7 days after delivery.)
- I have made prior arrangements to privately store my cord blood

Newborn Care:

Feeding

- Breastfeeding exclusively
- Formula feeding exclusively
- Combination of breastfeeding and formula feeding
- Pumping and feeding breastmilk by bottle
- If my baby requires supplementation, I am interested in feeding methods other than a bottle.

It's OK to offer my baby

- Pacifier
- Sugar water
- Formula
- None of the above

Testing, Procedures and Medications:

Routine tests and procedures for your baby include the following. One hour after birth: Vitamin K shot, Hepatitis B vaccine, and Erythromycin ointment to the eyes, and bath. After 24 hours: Hearing screen, newborn screening blood test, jaundice screening and pulse oximetry screening (congenital heart disease screening).

- I plan to do all routine hospital tests, medications and procedures with my baby.
- I would like to discuss the risks and benefits before administration of:
- Vitamin K injection

- Erythromycin eye ointment
- Hepatitis B vaccination
- I would like to delay baby’s first bath for hours.
- I am planning on a circumcision if I have a boy.
- I am NOT planning on a circumcision if I have a boy.
- I would like my newborn photographed using the hospital vendor.

Postpartum Care:

- Please offer my pain medication when it is due
- I will ask for pain medication when I feel I need it
- If I am sleeping, please do not wake me to offer pain medication
- I would like to participate in the discussion of my plan of care; please wake me if I am sleeping at shift change (normally around 5am and 5pm)

Rooming In:

Riverside offers family-centered care that creates an environment to foster bonding between mom, baby and family. As a part of this family-centered approach, we encourage rooming in, where your baby is kept in the room with you, rather than in the nursery. This is a special time for you to get to know your newborn and learn how to care for him/her and for yourself, and is especially helpful for those who are breastfeeding. If you should need our newborn nursery, it is available to you at any time during your stay.

Questions you would like to discuss with your OB Provider:
