

Your birth plan: facilities and birthing birth companions

Where to give birth

You will have a choice about where to have your baby. Your midwife or doctor will be able to tell you what services are available locally and advise you on any issues to do with your health or pregnancy that may affect your choice.

- I would like to give birth at home
- I would like to give birth in a midwifery unit
- I would like to give birth in a maternity team unit in hospital
- I am not sure yet where I would like to give birth

My comments on where I would like to give birth and why:

e.g. I would like to give birth in hospital in case I want an epidural

Companions

Having a companion you can 'lean on' and who can support you during your labour can be helpful. It has been shown to reduce the need for pain relief.

- I would like my partner or companion(s) to be with me during labour
- I would not like my partner or companion(s) to be with me during labour
- I am not sure yet whether I would like my partner or companion(s) to be with me during labour

My birth partner and/or companion is:

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Companions during a forceps or vacuum delivery

A forceps delivery is where forceps are placed around the baby's head to pull him or her gently from the birth canal. Vacuum delivery, sometimes called ventouse, is when the baby is guided out using a cap fitted to its head by suction.

- I would like my partner or companion(s) to be with me if I have a forceps or vacuum delivery
- I would not like my partner or companion(s) to be with me if I have a forceps or vacuum delivery
- I do not mind if my partner or companion(s) is with me if I have a forceps or vacuum delivery
- I am not sure yet whether I would like my partner or companion(s) to be with me if I have a forceps or vacuum delivery

Companions during a caesarean section

A caesarean section is when the baby is delivered by cutting through the abdomen and into the womb. This will only be performed when it is necessary, but there are situations where this is the safest option for either you or your baby. If your caesarean section is carried out under local anaesthetic and you are awake, your partner or companion may sit with you.

- I would like my partner or companion to be with me if I have a caesarean section
- I would not like my partner or companion to be with me if I have a caesarean section
- I do not mind if my partner or companion is with me if I have a caesarean section
- I am not sure yet if I would like my partner or companion to be with me if I have a caesarean section

Birthing equipment

You may find that items such as wall bars, mats or beanbags help you to change position and remain comfortable during labour. If you're giving birth in a maternity unit, your midwife will be able to tell you if specific items are normally available. However, you may need or prefer to provide some equipment yourself.

- I plan to use equipment such as mats or beanbags during labour
- I do not plan to use equipment such as mats or beanbags during labour
- I am not sure yet whether I would like to use equipment such as mats or beanbags during labour

My comments on birthing equipment and whether I will provide it:

e.g. I will bring my own beanbag but would like to use a birthing pool provided by the maternity unit

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Special facilities

Some units may offer you special facilities such as a birthing pool. Some have special rooms called LDRP rooms (labour, delivery, recovery, postnatal rooms) where you stay in the same room until you leave the hospital. Your midwife will be able to tell you what's available.

- I would like to use a special LDRP room, if available
- I would like to use a birthing pool, if available
- I would like to use other special facilities
- I am not sure yet whether I would like to use special facilities, such as a special LDRP room or birthing pool, if available

My comments on any special facilities I would like to use:

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Any other comments or preferences about birth location, facilities or companions:

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Your birth plan: labour and birth

Monitoring during labour

Every baby is monitored throughout labour to make sure that it is not in distress. There are different ways of monitoring the baby's heartbeat.

- I have discussed with my midwife how I would like my baby's heart to be monitored if everything is straightforward
- I have not discussed with my midwife how I would like my baby's heart to be monitored if everything is straightforward

My comments on monitoring my baby during labour:

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Keeping active during labour

Keep active for as long as you feel comfortable. This helps the progress of the birth. Keeping active doesn't mean doing anything strenuous, just moving around normally.

- I would like to move around during labour
- I would not like to move around during labour
- I do not mind whether or not I move around during labour
- I am not sure yet whether I would like to move around during labour

My comments on moving around during labour:

e.g. I would prefer to be in an upright position for as long as possible

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Positions for labour and birth

Find the positions you prefer and which will make labour easier for you. Try out various positions at antenatal class or at home to find out which are the most comfortable for you. You can choose as many positions as you want and vary them throughout your labour.

- I would like to be in bed with my back propped up by pillows
- I would like to be standing
- I would like to be sitting
- I would like to be kneeling
- I would like to be kneeling on all fours
- I would like to be squatting
- I would like to be lying on my side
- I am not sure yet which positions I would like to be in during labour

Skin-to-skin contact with your baby

Immediately after the birth you can have your baby lifted straight onto you before the cord is cut so that you can be close to each other immediately. If you prefer, you can ask the midwife to wipe your baby and wrap him or her in a blanket first.

- I would like my baby delivered straight onto my tummy
- I would like my baby cleaned first before being given to me
- I do not mind if my baby is cleaned before being given to me
- I am not sure yet whether I would like my baby delivered straight onto my tummy

My comments on anything special I would like to happen immediately after the birth:

e.g. I would like my partner to tell me whether the baby is a boy or a girl

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Midwives, nurses and doctors in training

Midwives, nurses and doctors need to observe women in labour as part of their training. They will always be supervised by a senior health professional.

- I have discussed with my midwife my thoughts about having midwives, nurses or doctors in training with me during labour
- I have not discussed with my midwife my thoughts about having midwives, nurses or doctors in training with me during labour

Any other comments or preferences about my labour and birth:

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Your birth plan: pain relief and medical care

Pain relief options

There are many different pain relief options. Some women use a combination of methods. You may find that you want more pain relief than you had planned, or that more effective pain relief may be advised to assist with delivery. You can use a number of different methods at different times.

- I would like to try breathing and relaxation
- I would like to try being in water during labour and/or birth
- I would like to try massage
- I would like to try acupuncture
- I would like to try TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation)
- I would like to try gas and air (entonox)
- I would like to try pain-relieving injections
- I would like to try an epidural
- I would like to try other methods of pain relief
- I would like to try to manage without pain relief

My preferences for pain relief:

e.g. I want to try to manage with gas and air but would like the option of an epidural

Having an episiotomy

An episiotomy is a cut in the perineum (the area between the vagina and anus). This may be necessary if the perineum won't stretch enough and may tear, or if the baby is short of oxygen and needs to be delivered quickly.

- I have discussed with my midwife or doctor why an episiotomy might be necessary
- I have not discussed with my midwife or doctor why an episiotomy might be necessary

My feelings about the possible need for an episiotomy:

e.g. I would like my midwife to tell me if she thinks I am going to need one as I don't want to tear

Delivering the placenta after the birth

After your baby is born your midwife will offer you an injection in your thigh. This contains the drug syntometrine or syntocinon which helps the womb contract and can prevent the heavy bleeding that some women may experience without it.

- I have discussed with my midwife what happens after labour when the placenta is delivered
- I have not discussed with my midwife what happens after labour when the placenta is delivered

My preferences about delivering the placenta:

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Any other comments or preferences about pain relief and medical care

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Your birth plan: your baby

Feeding your baby

Breast milk is the best form of nutrition for babies as it provides all the nutrients a baby needs and has lasting benefits for the health of your child. Infant formula milk can be used as an alternative to breast milk.

- I would like to breastfeed my baby
- I would like to bottle feed my baby
- I would like to try a mixture of breastfeeding and bottle feeding
- I am not sure yet how I would like to feed my baby

My comments about feeding my baby:

e.g. I plan to breastfeed so I want my baby close to me at all times or brought to me so that I can feed on demand

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Vitamin K for your baby

Vitamin K is needed to make the blood clot properly. Some newborn babies have too little vitamin K so it may be suggested that your baby be given vitamin K either by injection or by mouth.

- I have given my midwife my consent to give my baby vitamin K
- I have not given my midwife my consent to give my baby vitamin K

Any other comments or preferences about me and my baby immediately after the birth:

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Your birth plan: extra help

Special requirements

If you have any special requirements, please tick any that apply to you. You can fill in more details in the box below.

- English is not my first language, and I need someone present who speaks my first language
- I need a sign language interpreter
- I have special dietary requirements
- I and/or my partner have special needs
- I would like certain religious customs to be observed

My special requirements are:

e.g. my first language, special diet, I need wheelchair access, or any other requirements

Your birth plan: general comments

Further comments or thoughts following discussions with my midwife or doctor:

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Next steps

Prepare for discussion with your GP, midwife or consultant.