

# How to Build a Birth Plan

When putting together a birth plan there are a few key points to remember:

1) Title your birth plan your “Birth Preferences”:

By doing so you acknowledge that there is no one set path in birth and that you are open to discussing alternatives to your preferences, should they become necessary.

2) Use positive language:

Most nurses and care providers really do care that you have a positive experience and want to help you. Try to avoid saying “no” over and over again and instead of describing what you don’t want, describe what you do want.

“Prefer to stretch or tear naturally”	vs	“No episiotomy”
“Jane would like to wear the gown she has brought from home”	vs	“No hospital gown”
“Prefer to keep bag of waters intact if no SROM”	vs	“No breaking bag of waters”

3) Keep it short:

Narrow down your list of preferences by omitting any that you know are already standard practice at your chosen birthing location and including those that you feel are most important to you and your family. The birth plan that you show your care provider(s) and nurses should be no more than one page in length. You may want to keep a longer, more detailed version for yourself or include a separate page with your cesarean preferences.

4) Make it your own:

Do not feel like you have to follow a certain format when completing your birth plan, including that of the birth template that is included here. There are many ways of getting your point across while keeping it short and positive. You can use bullet points, full sentences, even pictures if you are feeling creative or any other format that suits you best.



# Birth Preferences

Mother:

Birth Partner:

Others present:

Doula:

Intro Paragraph: Include a nice introduction, your general goals for your birth (think big picture: unmedicated, comfortable, using hypnosis, calm, quite, upbeat, etc), how your nurses or care provider can help you, and obvious gratitude.

During Labor:

Any requests that are not standard practice, involving

- Electronic Fetal Monitoring
- IVs or Heplock
- Hospital Gowns
- Hydrotherapy
- Eating and Drinking
- Mobility
- Vaginal Exams
- Augmentation
- Pain medication preferences (such as strength of the epidural, if one is desired).
- Any other preferences that are important to you.

During Birth:

Any requests that are not standard practice, involving

- Pushing (Spontaneous, Directed, J Breathing, etc)
- Mobility/ pushing positions
- Stretching, tearing, and episiotomy preferences
- Mirror
- Feeling baby's head when crowning
- Warm compresses or counter pressure
- Lubricant
- Catching baby
- Water birth



- Photography or video recording
- Announcing sex of baby
- Photography or video
- Any other preferences that are important to you!

After Birth:

Any requests that are not standard practice, involving:

- Immediate skin to skin contact
- Cord clamping
- Delivery of placenta (natural vs traction)
- Routine use of post partum pitocin
- Erythromycin
- Vitamin K
- Other immediate newborn procedures
- Breastfeeding support
- Photography or video
- Any other preferences that are important to you!

Ceserean Preferences: (Unless they are brief, you may want to include these preferences on a separate page)

Any requests that are not standard practice, involving:

- How many people you would like in the room
- Arm restraints
- Drapes
- Noise/ music
- Lighting
- Skin to Skin
- Breastfeeding
- Person who stays with baby
- Person who stays with mom
- Any other preferences that are important to you!

