



So Many Choices

Questions to Ask about Birthplaces

For more information, see: *Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Newborn* (PCN) pages 11-15, *The Simple Guide to Having a Baby* (SG) page 68; http://www.motherfriendly.org/pdf/Having_a_Baby-English-8_5x11.pdf.

Timing: Plan to visit or call birthplaces in your first or second trimester. Before you visit, review the birthplace's web site and any written materials you have, to see which questions are answered there. Also, review the birth plan chapter to see what issues you may want to ask about (PCN Chapter 8, SG Chapter 4).

Birthplace: _____

Who can be with me:

- Who can be with me during labor and birth? _____
- What are the visitor policies after the birth? _____
- What is the ratio of patients to nurses during early labor _____ active labor _____ birth _____ after birth _____?
- Are doulas welcome? _____

Hospital routines for labor and birth:

- Are birth plans encouraged? _____
- What happens during a normal labor and birth in this setting? _____

- What equipment is used to monitor the baby's heart rate? _____
- How often is it monitored? _____
- Can I walk and move around during labor? While being monitored? _____
- Do most laboring women have intravenous (IV) fluids? _____
- Can I eat during labor? _____
- What positions are suggested for the birth? _____
- What non-drug methods of pain relief are encouraged? _____

- What comfort tools are available? (Bathtub? Birth ball?) _____
- How often is the bathtub used for comfort? _____ Can I give birth in the tub? _____
- Is anesthesia available at all times? _____
- If I have a cesarean, where will it take place? _____ Who can be with me? _____

After the birth:

- What usually happens to a baby immediately after birth? _____

- Will my baby go to the nursery or stay with me? _____
- May I hold my baby for the initial assessments? _____
- What if my baby is born early or has special problems? _____
- How long is the usual stay after a vaginal birth? _____ After a cesarean? _____
- How does the birthplace help mothers who want to breastfeed? _____
- Are there breastfeeding specialists on staff? _____ May I call them after I go home? _____
- Does the birthplace offer support after I go home? _____





Your Options: Preparing for a Home Birth

If you're considering a home birth, interview your potential midwife(s). You can ask her the questions on the Questions to Ask about Birthplaces list above, and those on the Questions for Potential Caregivers list. She will be able to answer these questions and tell you what supplies you'd need for a home birth, when to call her to attend your birth, what happens if she needs to transfer you to a hospital, and more.

