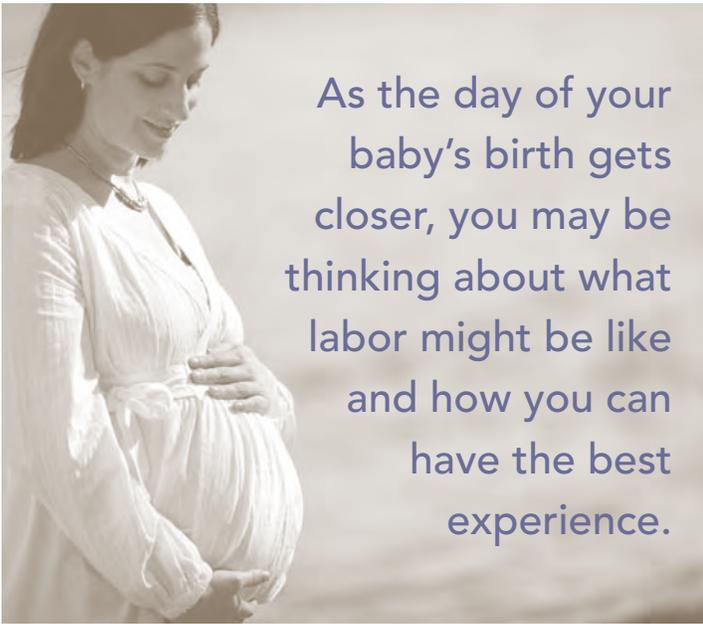


my birth preference plan





As the day of your baby's birth gets closer, you may be thinking about what labor might be like and how you can have the best experience.

One way to convey your preferences to the labor and delivery staff who will care for you is to create a birth preference plan.

A birth preference plan is not a contract. You can change your plan any time. Since we cannot know exactly what the birth of your baby will be like beforehand, we cannot assure you that all your wishes will be the right ones for your labor. We will work with you to keep your birth experience as close to what you want as possible, while keeping the safety of your baby and you our top priority.

Kaiser Permanente's Philosophy

It is our intention that every woman be treated with respect for her individuality and personal preferences. In keeping with this philosophy, we:

- strongly recommend classes to help you prepare for childbirth. Even for women planning to use pain medicine, childbirth classes help develop the skills needed to deal with early labor.
- support movement while in labor because it often helps labor progress.
- support women who would like a birth that is without medicine and advocate for having people present to help and support this decision.
- support women who have a preference for a birth that is as pain free as possible by using medicine for pain or epidural anesthesia at a suitable time in labor.
- do not order routine episiotomies.

Besides creating a birth plan, there are a few things you can do to feel more at home while you are in labor. You can bring:

- photographs, flowers, or things that might be of comfort to you, such as a special blanket, pillow, or something that might help you focus while you breathe through your contractions. Think of your labor room as your bedroom!
- music and a battery-powered music player.
- a cooler with food and drink for your birth partner or support person. You may also bring clear liquid drinks for yourself because your preferred drink may not be supplied at the hospital.

Above all, Kaiser Permanente is committed to ensure that all mothers, babies, and families have a healthy and safe birth experience.

Preparing for Your Labor and Birth Experience

You may be wondering what your birth experience will be like for you. This brochure on labor and birth will give you the facts you need to prepare for childbirth. Discuss any concerns or questions with your health care professional.

LABOR

Your Health Care Team

The health care professionals who will care for you during your labor may include a registered nurse (RN) and a certified nurse midwife (CNM). You will also have an obstetrician/gynecologist (Ob/Gyn), including a resident physician at some Kaiser



Permanente facilities, and an anesthesiologist or certified nurse anesthetist (CRNA).

Your clinic physicians, midwives, and other members of your health care team will work together to provide ongoing care for you during your labor.

Many pregnant women will be cared for by a CNM and a labor nurse along with the physician. If you or your baby develop a problem, the physician will be on hand right away. For most high-risk patients, or patients requiring surgery, a physician will manage the care throughout labor and birth. At the change of shifts, the physicians and nurses meet to review your care plan carefully so that the oncoming team is well prepared to take over.

If you want more details about your health care team, please refer to the prenatal newsletter *Healthy Beginnings* (Issue 1).

Birth Setting

You can take a virtual tour of your birth setting at kp.org/ob/scal. Some Kaiser Permanente facilities offer maternity tours of their Labor and Delivery suites when rooms are available. Please call your Health Education Department at your local medical center toll-free at 1-866-402-4320.

This is *your* birth experience and we want you to tell your health care team about any preferences that you have for your birth setting.

Birth Support

Support people are encouraged to take an active role in giving physical and emotional support. You should think about having people who are nurturing



and will support your needs. Visiting policies and the number of support people who can be with you during labor vary at each medical center. Discuss this with your health care professional at one of your prenatal visits.

Birth support people can include:

- **Family.** You may choose to have your partner, a family member, or a close friend help you during your labor and birth.
- **Sibling involvement.** Some families may want to include their children in the birth experience. If

you choose to have your child at the birth, please have an adult other than the primary support person to care for the child if needed. Some Kaiser Permanente facilities do not allow younger children in the Labor and Delivery suites. If you have questions about this, discuss it with your health care professional at one of your prenatal visits.

- **Doula.** A doula is a woman trained in childbirth to give advice to you and your partner, emotional support, and physical comfort to you before, during, and just after childbirth. If you choose to hire a doula, you will have to pay for her services.

Fetal Monitoring

- **External.** A monitor supported by an elastic band is placed on your abdomen to check your baby's heartbeat and your contractions. If your baby is doing well, you have the choice of being monitored continuously when in bed and from time to time when walking.
- **Internal.** Internal monitors are used only when more details are needed about your baby's well being. These are applied during a vaginal exam.

Nutrition

- **Light diet/Fluids.** While in early labor at home, eat light foods. Foods that are easy to digest include soups or broth, crackers, and gelatin. This



will give you energy during the later stages of labor. Since your digestion will slow down during active labor, avoid heavy foods such as meat, dairy, or protein.

The hospital will provide clear liquids, such as tea, fruit juices, broth, and ice chips. However, you may have other choices, such as Popsicles.

- **Intravenous (IV) fluids.** An IV may be needed to give you medicines for pain or in case there is an emergency. Intravenous fluids may be given during active labor and birth to avoid dehydration. If you want to walk, the IV may be taken with you or the IV line can be plugged with a "saline lock." IVs are also required before an epidural.

Comfort Measures/Pain Relief

Comfort measures can include:

- **Relaxed environment.** A quiet or darkened room and soft music helps maintain a relaxed environment. This can decrease your stress and anxiety during labor. Personal items from home may also relax and comfort you. You may wish to keep the room very quiet and lower the lighting. You may bring items such as photos or other things you can focus on during labor, favorite music, pillows, socks, mints, or lip balm.

Kaiser Permanente is not responsible for your belongings, so please secure items of value. Also, because of fire regulations, electronic items must be battery operated.

- **Relaxation and breathing techniques.** Relaxation and breathing techniques help you focus and relax during contractions. These helpful techniques are

taught in Kaiser Permanente childbirth preparation classes and should be practiced often with your partner. These techniques may also be found in videos or DVDs.

- **Pelvic exercises.** There are several exercises you can do to prepare you for birth. The rhythmic motion of the hips opens the pelvic bone to help position the baby for vaginal birth. These positions help move the baby down the birth canal and help relieve pressure on your back. Pelvic exercises can also serve to distract you to reduce your pain.

If you use a birthing ball, check with your Kaiser Permanente facility to see if you need to provide your own or if it will be supplied to you. You can also try slow dancing, labor hula, or pelvic rock. Practice these during your pregnancy if you plan to use these techniques while in labor.

To find out more about prenatal classes and about videos and DVDs, contact your local Health Education Department by calling the Healthy Living Helpline toll-free at 1-866-402-4320.

Medicines

Some women are able to manage labor pain without medicine using ways such as relaxation, position changes, breathing techniques, and massage. Other women choose narcotics or epidural pain medicines. Pain medicines are considered safe for the baby. Both narcotic and epidural anesthesia may either slow or speed up the progress of labor. If it is slowed too much, medicine can correct this.

- **IV narcotics/Pain medicines.** Narcotic medicine may be given through the IV. These medicines reduce or dull the pain of contractions and help you cope with your labor. They may briefly make



you and your baby feel sleepy or drowsy. Only medicines that are known to be safe for your baby are chosen. Your certified nurse midwife or physician may choose to order IV pain medicines, if needed.

- **Epidural anesthesia.** You may choose to receive an epidural anesthesia while you are in labor. An epidural gives the most pain relief during labor by relieving pain from the waist down. It is given during labor by an anesthesiologist or a CRNA. You can adjust it for your needs as labor progresses. It will last throughout your labor. Your nurse will teach you how to adjust the pain medicine.

An epidural is given in your lower back with a small catheter (tube) that is threaded through a guiding needle. It is safe and has very few problems. Due

to loss of sensation and muscle relaxation, a catheter may be inserted into your bladder to keep the bladder empty. You will need to stay in bed once you have received an epidural. Your contractions and the baby's heart rate will be monitored. An epidural may slow your labor or may interfere with your urge to push. This can be corrected by simple measures. The epidural wears off shortly after delivery.

You may have questions about some of your options. Your health care professional or physician may help you decide which option is best for you.

Techniques to Enhance Labor

1. **Walking.** Walking increases your body's circulation and may help to increase the strength and frequency of your contractions. Gravity can help your baby move into the birth canal while you are walking.

Walking in your birthing room or in the hallways may enhance your labor. However, if you have an epidural in place, or if constant monitoring is needed, you will not be able to walk.

2. **Emptying your bladder.** When your bladder is empty, your contractions may feel less painful. It will also allow your baby's head to drop lower into your pelvis. A catheter will be inserted to empty your bladder if you cannot do so on your own.

Try to make frequent trips to the bathroom. If you cannot get out of bed, the nurse will assist you with a bedpan.

3. **Hydrotherapy.** You may choose to take a shower during labor. Showering with warm water may help you to relax and may give you comfort.

4. **Heat or cold.** Your nurse can give you warm or cold packs to help you relax your muscles as well as lessen pain or tension. A warm pack or ice pack can be placed against your back.

5. **Stress reduction techniques.** Rhythmic breathing (such as Lamaze), visualization/relaxation techniques, massage/therapeutic touch, music therapy, and position changes can all help to reduce stress during labor.

6. **Breaking bag of water.** The rupture (breaking) of membranes during a vaginal examination may be used to start or speed up your labor. This may also be needed for internal monitoring. You may



have discomfort during the vaginal exam, but breaking the water itself does not cause pain.

Induction of Labor

When labor needs to be started, there are medicines or simple procedures that may be used. These may include medicines placed in the vagina, given orally, and/or given through an IV.

Pitocin is a medicine that is given through an IV. It may be used to make your labor start or to strengthen your contractions. It helps by increasing the strength and frequency of your contractions a little at a time. This is generally done under certain medical conditions.

BIRTH

Vaginal Birth

During the first part of active labor, contractions become strong and regular. To help you cope, have a support person assist you in trying different positions using rhythmic breathing exercises. Pain medicine can be given at this time. Even if you plan on giving birth without medicine, it can comfort you to know that you can get pain relief if you need it.

After your cervix is fully effaced (thinned) and dilated (opened), your body changes to “push” mode. During this second stage of active labor, the baby is born. Pushing from the beginning to birth may take a few minutes to several hours. It may be faster if you have had a baby before.

During a vaginal birth, you may get a laceration, which is a natural tear. Or you may need an episiotomy, which is a cut that the physician or midwife

may make in the perineum (the skin and muscle between the vagina and anus). This cut is made to make the vaginal opening larger, just before the baby’s head appears. An episiotomy is commonly needed to help deliver the baby more quickly. After birth, most natural tears and episiotomies need stitches.

To find out more on the stages of labor, refer to *Healthy Beginnings* (Issue 7).

Cesarean Birth

A cesarean birth is the birth of the baby through an incision (cut) in your abdomen. Some cesarean births are scheduled in advance. Some reasons for a planned cesarean birth may include abnormal location of the placenta, breech position of the baby, active genital herpes infection, or a history of previous cesarean births. Some cesarean births are not planned and the decision is made during labor. Some reasons why this might occur are that the cervix does not dilate during labor, the baby is too big for your pelvis, or the baby cannot tolerate the stress of labor.

The surgery is done in an operating room located in the Labor and Delivery Unit. If the surgery is not an emergency, usually one support person is allowed to be with the mother. In most cases, epidural anesthesia is used and the mother is awake and can see, hear, and touch or hold the baby after birth.

In case of an emergency, family members and support people may be asked to leave the delivery room.

If you want a vaginal birth after having had a cesarean, discuss this option with your physician.

Cord Blood Collection

Cord blood is blood that comes out of the baby's umbilical cord after birth and the cord has been cut. There are some limited medical uses for this blood. Companies charge you to save this blood for possible future use. There are times when the baby's cord blood may not be able to be collected.

If you choose to store your baby's cord blood, 4 weeks prior to the birth of your baby, contact a cord blood banking company to store or donate your baby's cord blood. You will have to contact and pay a cord blood storage company for this

service. Be sure to bring a cord blood collection kit with you to the hospital.

YOUR BABY

Family and Visitors

We know you will want to celebrate the birth of your baby with family and friends. We want you to be comfortable during this important time in your life and to make your childbirth experience the best it can be. During this special time, you need your rest and we respect that you want to bond with your



baby. Sometimes visitors can interfere with your rest or your time with your baby.

You can limit your visitors. To plan for the birth of your baby, make a list of the most important people you would like to visit you at this time. The others can wait until you are home for a few days and get into a routine. Make sure to discuss your wishes with your family and friends before you give birth.

Skin-to-Skin Contact

After birth, your baby may be placed directly on your chest. Direct skin-to-skin contact of mother and baby enhances bonding and helps maintain the baby's body temperature. After birth, you, your partner, and your baby will be given intimate family time to bond without being disturbed by family or friends.

It's a good idea to keep your baby's bare skin touching the parent's bare skin as much as you can.

Baby Care

After the first skin-to-skin contact, the nurse will spend a few minutes with your baby to give your baby the required care. This is the type of care your baby will have:

- Your baby will be **weighed**.
- Your baby will be **measured**. A small, disposable paper tape measure will be used to measure your baby's head.
- When your baby is warm enough, your baby will be given a **bath**.

Other care your baby can receive is:

- An antibiotic ointment called **erythromycin** will be put in the baby's eyes to prevent infection.



- An injection of **vitamin K** is routinely given to newborns to prevent bleeding. This is done because newborns are born with a vitamin K deficiency that can make it difficult for their blood to clot, which can result in bleeding.
- Your baby will be given the **hepatitis B vaccine** in the hospital. The hepatitis B virus causes serious and sometimes fatal liver disease. A vaccination against hepatitis B prevents infection and its complications. The vaccine may cause your baby to have a mild to moderate fever.

See *Healthy Beginnings* (Issues 9 and 10) for more details on baby care.

Feeding Your Baby

Kaiser Permanente recommends the guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics to exclusively breastfeed your baby for the first 6 months and continue breastfeeding for at least 12 months and longer if desired by both mother and baby.

The reasons for breastfeeding include:

- Breastfeeding creates a unique bond between you and your baby.
- Breast milk is the perfect food for babies; formula does not have the same effect. Breast milk is the easiest food for your baby to digest.
- Breast milk helps fight infection.



Babies who have bottles or pacifiers in the hospital may have trouble learning to latch and suckle at the breast because of the difference in the shape and feel of the artificial nipples.

Attend the Breastfeeding with Success class. Call your Health Education Department at your local medical center toll-free at 1-866-402-4320 to register.

Refer to your *Healthy Beginnings* newsletters (see Issues 2, 4, 8, and 10) and the *Breastfeeding With Success* manual to get more information or call your lactation consultant at your local medical center.

OTHER NEEDS

Making a Birth Memory

If you want to have the birth of your baby photographed, check with the hospital where you will give birth to find out about the rules on cameras and video equipment in Labor and Delivery. If you bring a camera and/or video recorder, use film that is designed for use in low light (400 ASA). For safety reasons, outside light sources or tripods are not allowed in the delivery room. Don't forget to bring batteries because video equipment cannot be plugged into hospital outlets.

Your partner's role should be to support you during labor and birth. If videotaping is important to you, think about asking a friend or family member to videotape so that your partner can focus on you.

Cultural Diversity

Kaiser Permanente is a strong advocate of cultural diversity. Please discuss your cultural preferences or traditions with your health care professional about the birth of your baby.

I will bring this completed form to my next prenatal visit.

I will not complete this form at this time. I will have my health care team make decisions as they occur.



Patient Information:

We are committed to working with you to make your childbirth experience the best it can be. Your individuality and personal preferences are important to us. We will strive to meet your expectations while keeping you and your baby's health our top priority. In keeping with this philosophy, we will:

- Respect your wishes about pain management and breastfeeding.
- Keep you informed at all stages of your labor.
- Be committed to listening and explaining to you in a compassionate manner.

My Birth Preference Plan

LABOR

Birth Support: _____

Primary Support Person: _____

Others attending the birth and their role: _____

Special concerns during labor:

Please address any concerns or fears your caregivers should be aware of:

BIRTH

Is there anything your caregivers should know that will help you to create the atmosphere or the memories that will make this birth experience everything you would like it to be?

YOUR BABY

Soon after birth, we will give you special bonding time with your family that will include direct skin-to-skin contact with mom and baby. Are there any requests you have for this bonding time?

Cultural/Family Traditions

Do you have any cultural or family traditions you will observe while in the hospital?

COMFORT MEASURES/PAIN RELIEF

I wish to try:

- Relaxation techniques
- Breathing techniques
- Warm shower
- Massage by my partner or doula
- Narcotic medicine
- Epidural analgesia
- Music brought by my partner
- Other _____

The following statement best describes how I feel about pain medicine:

- I want pain medicine/epidural to be given as soon as I am in labor as is safe and allowed.
- I plan to have medicine/epidural when I really need it.
- I wish to avoid medicine but will accept pain medicine for a difficult, painful birth.
- I strongly desire a childbirth without medicine and will be disappointed if I was given medicines.

My Baby Feeding Preferences:

- I wish to breastfeed in the hospital.
- I wish to bottle feed in the hospital.
- Both (not recommended while the baby is learning to latch).
- I do not want my baby to have any bottles or pacifiers in the hospital.
- I would like more information before my baby is born.

Other comments or requests:

