

## CHAPTER 2: SO MANY CHOICES

# Questions to Ask about Birthplaces

For more information on birthplace options, see:

- *Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Newborn* pages 11–14, *The Simple Guide to Having a Baby* page 68
- <http://www.childbirthconnection.org/article.asp?ClickedLink=252&ck=10145&area=27>

**Timing:** Although you can do this at any time during pregnancy, we recommend that you plan to visit or call birthplaces in your first or second trimester. Typically, caregivers have privileges only at certain facilities, so choosing a caregiver and birthplace goes hand in hand. If you have already chosen your caregiver, you can ask them these questions about the birthplace.

Before you visit, review the birthplace's website and any written materials you have; some questions may be 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 these registered nurses or paraprofessionals? \_\_\_\_\_

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? \_\_\_\_\_

What can I eat and drink during labor? \_\_\_\_\_

What nondrug 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? \_\_\_\_\_

What positions are suggested for the birth? \_\_\_\_\_

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 I be able to hold my baby skin to skin right away? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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 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? \_\_\_\_\_

## Questions to Ask about Out-of-Hospital Birth

If you're considering a home birth, interview your potential midwife. You can ask her the questions on the Questions to Ask about Birthplaces list above and those on the Questions for Potential Caregivers list.

**Also ask these questions:**

If health issues arise in my pregnancy, would you send me to a physician for consultation or recommend that I transfer my care?

\_\_\_\_\_

Which physicians do you work closely with? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What supplies will I need for a home birth? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where do I get them? \_\_\_\_\_

When in labor should I call you to attend my birth? \_\_\_\_\_

How often do your clients transfer to the hospital during labor and why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which hospital do you transfer to, and what have your clients' experiences there been like? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you do to smooth the transfer process? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you go with me to the hospital? \_\_\_\_\_