

CHAPTER 2: SO MANY CHOICES

Questions to Ask Potential Caregivers

For more information, see:

- *Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Newborn* pages 14–18, *The Simple Guide to Having a Baby* pages 22–23
- <http://www.childbirthconnection.org/article.asp?ClickedLink=247&ck=10158&area=27>

Timing: It's best to choose a caregiver before conception or in early pregnancy, so you can begin getting prenatal care. These questions may also aid you in your choice if you need to switch care providers in later pregnancy. Before you visit, review the caregiver's website and any written materials you have; some questions may be answered there.

Physician's or midwife's name: _____

Where were you trained? _____ How long ago? _____

How many births have you attended? _____

What portion of the labor and birth process do you typically attend? _____

Who provides care:

Will I see you or another caregiver at each prenatal appointment? _____

Does a nurse sometimes handle prenatal visits? _____

Do the caregivers in your group share a similar philosophy of care? _____

What are the chances you'll attend my birth? _____

Do you think it's a good idea to induce labor so I'll give birth when you're on call? _____

Will your colleagues respect the birth plan I've made with you? _____

Will the hospital staff respect the birth plan? _____

Do you recommend childbirth preparation classes? _____ Doula? _____ Birth plans? _____

Managing labor:

Which nondrug ways to relieve labor pain do you recommend? _____

May I move around during labor? _____

May I eat? _____

What positions do you recommend for birth? _____

How many of your clients attempt natural childbirth (birth without pain medication)? _____

How do you support them? _____

If I prefer to have an epidural, are there any restrictions or any reasons why I might not get it? _____

What are your standard orders related to IV fluids and fetal monitoring? _____

Can those routines be altered to conform to my needs and desires? _____

How often do you perform a cesarean birth with a first-time mother having a low-risk pregnancy? _____

How many of your clients—low- and high-risk—have a cesarean? _____

What can I do to help reduce the likelihood of needing a cesarean? _____

If I develop complications during pregnancy or labor, will you manage my care or will you refer me to another caregiver? _____

Who is that person? _____

When and how often will I see you for checkups after the birth? _____

How do you help mothers who want to breastfeed? _____

For midwives, ask: Who is your backup physician? _____

What conditions lead to a physician referral? _____

If you're concerned about whether the caregiver will respect your legal right to informed consent and refusal see:

- PCN page 8
- http://www.solaceformothers.org/tools/Informed_with_notes.pdf for a list of questions that you may want to ask.

For questions to ask doulas, see:

- Questions to Ask Birth Doulas in the So Many Choices section of www.PCNGuide.com
- http://www.dona.org/mothers/how_to_hire_a_doula.php.