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Labor and Delivery Questions to Ask Your Care Providers

Here are some questions to ask your care providers in advance of your delivery, so you can get these important conversations started now and feel more educated, confident, and prepared for your big day!



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Your Care Providers are Here for You - And These are the Labor and Delivery Questions to Ask

As labor and delivery gets nearer, it’s important to ensure all your questions about the experience, particularly if this is your first baby, are answered by your care providers. The idea of giving birth is often simultaneously exciting – after all, you’ll finally get to meet your little one! – and intimidating, with flashes of every movie and T.V. birth scene replaying in your mind’s eye. Having clear, open communication with your care providers is ultra-important during this time – the more comfortable you feel asking anything and everything relating to your labor and delivery, then the more educated and confident you’ll feel when the big day comes. Having an idea of what to expect is always better when going into something as important as giving birth!

Here are some questions to consider while helping you get these conversations started with your care providers now:

Planning Your Birth Experience – Labor and Delivery Questions to Ask

- Will you be available around the time of my due date? If so, will you be the person who delivers my baby?
- If you are unavailable when I go into labor, who is your backup and will they then deliver my baby?
- What reason(s) would be needed to recommend that labor is induced?
- What happens if and/or when labor is induced?
- Under what circumstances will a C-section need to be performed, instead of having a vaginal birth?
- Do you support VBACs – vaginal births after Cesareans – and what are the prenatal expectations for a VBAC being possible?
- What hospitals and/or birthing centers are you in contract with, and where can I deliver my baby if I want to ensure you will attend the birth?
- How many support people am I allowed to have with me during labor and birth? How many visitors am I allowed to have afterwards?
- What pain management options will be available to me? Are there limitations on how and when I can have pain management during labor?

Planning Your Postpartum Experience – Important Questions to Ask

- What are the hospital’s or birthing center’s policies on delayed cord clamping/cutting?
- How can I ensure skin-to-skin contact with my baby immediately after birth, or ensure skin-to-skin contact with a family member immediately after birth following a C-section?
- How can I ensure breastfeeding is initiated as soon as possible after birth? If I am unable to be with my baby in the hours (or days) following birth, how do I request a [hospital-grade breast pump](#) to begin pumping colostrum for my baby?
- Is my partner or support person allowed to cut the umbilical cord?
- Will my baby be in the room with me throughout our hospital stay?
- What tests, vaccines, and exams will my baby receive after birth? What tests must be performed before we are allowed to go home?
- How soon will the baby need to visit a pediatrician after we leave the hospital? Are there pediatricians you can recommend?
- How soon after delivery will I have an appointment with you for my postpartum check-up?
- How can I be assured that my baby will receive formula only if absolutely necessary?
- If my baby needs to go to the NICU, how can I ensure myself or my support person will accompany them? Who will provide updates on my baby’s health status and condition, and how often will I receive those updates?
- What items should I [pack in my hospital bag](#) for myself and my baby? What necessities does the hospital or birthing center provide?

Remember, mama, this is your birth experience and your voice is important here! Don’t be afraid to advocate for the care that you wish to have, both prenatally and during labor and delivery. Ask all the questions you can think of at your prenatal appointments, so you can empower yourself to have the least stressful birth experience possible. Your care providers are here for you and should be happy to address questions and concerns as they arise – if they seem rushed, annoyed, hurried, or condescending, that may be a good indicator that he or she might not be the right care provider for you. Though healthcare providers are often busy and can be stretched thin at times, every pregnancy is different and you should always be treated as an individual patient – not as a number or as though you’re just one of many.

What Care Providers Will You Encounter?

Chances are, you’ll have more than a few healthcare providers during your prenatal and delivery experience. While your OB/GYN or midwife will certainly be the care provider that you’ll have the most frequent contact with in the months and weeks leading up to your delivery, you may also expect to be in contact with the following people at certain points before, during, and/or in the hospital or birthing center after your baby’s birth:

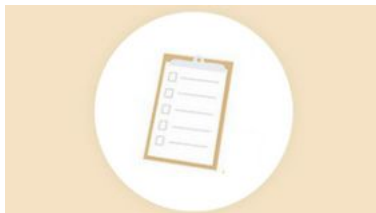
- Nurses and/or Physician Assistants
- Lactation Consultants
- Anesthesiologists
- Pediatricians
- Ultrasound and Imaging Technicians
- Phlebotomists
- Doulas

Though it may seem like a long list, the good news is that each of these people are here to make sure your little one is healthy and to help you have the best possible prenatal, birth, and breastfeeding experience! Knowing how each of them will support your pregnancy journey is incredibly helpful to reducing stress or anxiety and understanding what to expect. Remember, this personal journey is yours to help shape and advocate for – You’ve got this!

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