

PLANNING YOUR HOSPITAL STAY

No one should have to say goodbye to their beloved baby. No one. We hope that the information contained here will help you navigate your hospitalization, birth, and the beginning of your very personal grief journey. ***Grief is not a process of forgetting, it is a process of remembering.***

Please accept our condolences on the death of your baby. This guide will assist you in discussing your wishes with your partner/support person/family/providers. In completing this plan, you give your caregivers an idea of how to best care for you and your baby.

The following options and suggestions are a guide that can be adjusted any time you want. You don't have to decide everything at once. Your caregivers will give you specific information about what is available at your hospital. Ask your caregivers how much time you have to make decisions, so you do not miss any important opportunities for memory making or testing. Please share this plan with the hospital staff during your admission or hospital stay and make a copy for yourself to keep.

We encourage you to review the options on the following pages. You can also ask your doctor/ midwife/ nurse if there is someone at the hospital who can discuss this plan with you prior to admission.

MAKING A BIRTH PLAN

Names of the baby's parents:

Names of family members, support people and siblings (and ages) that you may want to visit during your hospitalization:

Is there anything you would like us to know about your pregnancy or your baby?

SUGGESTIONS OF ITEMS TO PACK FOR YOUR HOSPITAL STAY

- Insurance cards, hospital forms, and birth plan
- 2-3 pairs of socks, slippers or flip flops that can get dirty
- Warm sweater or robe
- 2 maternity bras
- Toiletries including hairbrush, hair clips or bands, toothbrush, dental floss, deodorant, face wash, makeup, shampoo and conditioner, lip balm
- Eyeglasses or contact lenses
- Labor comfort items such as a birthing ball, pillow, massager, music, ice pack, etc.
- A change of clothes for both the mother and the support person
- Snacks for labor partner
- Pen and paper
- Cell phone and charger
- A list of people you want to contact before or after the birth of your baby
- Extra memory card for camera and cell phone charger
- Video camera and charger
- Comfortable, loose-fitting clothes to wear when leaving the hospital
- Any clothing that you would like to use to dress your baby
- Any special baby items you would like to have for photographs (i.e. stuffed animal, baby jewelry, etc.)
- Any special religious items you would like to have for pictures (i.e. rosary beads, etc.)
- A journal or baby book
- Your birth plan (if you have one)

PLANNED METHOD OF DELIVERY

Your first instinct may be to want to have a cesarean birth (also known as a C-section) as quickly as possible. Labor and vaginal birth, however, will give you additional time to plan for the arrival of your baby. A cesarean birth may seem easier emotionally, it is important to note that it is major surgery. Your

postpartum recovery will take weeks and may be more challenging than if you had a vaginal birth. It is important to remember that if you have a cesarean, there are implications for future pregnancies. For some, having a vaginal birth may feel like a release and a start to your emotional healing.

PAIN MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR LABOR

- I would like information on my options for pain management during labor
- I would like to labor using natural methods of pain management (i.e. breathing exercises, hypnobirthing exercises, walking, etc.)
- I would like to receive intravenous pain medication
- I would like to have an epidural if possible

BIRTHING PERSON'S HOSPITAL STAY

- I would like my partner or myself to cut the umbilical cord
- I would like my other children to visit
- I would like my family/friends to visit
- I would like information on my options for where I will stay after giving birth (if applicable)

BREAST CARE

Most birthing people's breasts will produce milk after birth. Your doctor/midwife/nurse or a lactation consultant (if available) can provide guidance on suppressing milk production. Some birthing people opt to donate their milk to a milk bank so it can be used for another baby. Your nurse or a lactation consultant can provide this information if requested.

- I am unsure and would like more information or time to decide
- I would like information on what can help to suppress/stop milk production
- I would like information on donating my milk

KNOWING THE GENDER (SEX) AND NAMING YOUR BABY

NAMING YOUR BABY IS OPTIONAL.

- Our baby's name is _____
- I/we have decided not to name our baby.
- I/we are still deciding on a name
- I/we want to know our baby's gender
- I/we do not wish to know the gender of our baby

SPENDING TIME WITH MY/OUR BABY

- I/we are unsure and would like more information or time to consider the options
- I/we want to see my/our baby immediately after birth wrapped in blanket after being quickly cleaned
- I/we want my/our baby to be placed skin-to-skin immediately after birth
- I/we want to hold my/our baby immediately after birth
- Immediately after birth, my/our baby should be given to _____
- Please take my/our baby out of the room as soon as possible and bring him/her back in when or if requested
- I/we would like to spend unlimited time with my/our baby
- I/we wish to see but not hold my/our baby
- I/we would like our doctor/midwife/nurse to describe my/our baby's appearance before making a decision
- At this time, I/we do not wish to see my/our baby, but understand that we can change our minds
- Other options to consider include one parent only or other family and friends seeing/spending time with the baby outside of your room if the hospital is able to accommodate, sitting in a rocking chair, reading to your baby. We want you to be a parent to your baby in any way that you wish.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO OPTIONS

- I/we are unsure about photography and video and would like more information or time to consider
- I/We would like to take photos/videos with our own phone(s) and/or camera
- Please photograph our baby using a hospital camera (if available)
- Please print photos at the hospital (if available)
- Please save photos on a memory card or disc (if available)
- I/we will provide memory card if needed
- Allow the hospital photographer to take photos (if available)
- Please arrange for a Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep volunteer photographer (if available) www.NILMDTS.org
- I/we have arranged for a photographer to come to the hospital
- I/we would like candid photos of the baby with family, during bath, memory making or blessing/baptism
- I/we would like photos taken, but want to know our options if we do not want to take them home
- At this time, I/we do not want photos taken but understand we can change our minds up to a certain time

BATHING

- I/we would like to help bathe our baby
- I/we would like _____ to bathe our baby
- I/we would like a nurse to bathe our baby _____ in our room
_____ outside of our room.
- I/we are not sure and would like more time to consider the options

MEMENTOS

Please bring any items from home you would like your hospital to use for your baby such as clothing, blanket, hat, stuffed animal, jewelry, religious items, books, music, etc. Photos can be taken with these items. Request that all items be returned to you.

Below are some suggestions that may be available, however, depending on the age of your baby, some of these may be difficult to obtain. You may create any mementos that will be important to you. If any of the items is not available at your hospital, a family member or friend can provide it.

- I/we are not sure if we want mementos and need more information

HANDPRINT AND FOOTPRINT MOLDS

- I/we will provide kit if not available (can be purchased from most craft and hobby stores)

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- I/we would like any mementos offered by the hospital or the selections listed below
 - Baby bracelet
 - Lock of hair if possible
 - Tape measure marked with our baby's length
 - Crib card
 - Diaper
 - Record of the baby's weight and length
 - Blanket, hat, gown

- I/we would like these items collected but would like to know our options if we do not want to take them when leaving the hospital
- I/we do not want mementos at this time, but understand we may change our minds up to a certain point

MAKING MEMORIES

I/we would like to:

- Spend time alone with my/our baby
- Rock the baby
- Read to the baby
- Sing to the baby
- Play my/our favorite music
- Include family and friends if possible

BLESSING/BAPTISM/DEDICATION/RITUALS

Religious Affiliation: _____

- I/we desire a blessing or dedication by our own clergy
- I/we desire blessing or dedication, by someone other than our own clergy. Please inform me/us of the hospital's procedure for this.
- I/we desire baptism (in accordance with my/our religious traditions)
- I/we desire another ritual

Describe: _____

- I/we do not desire any ritual, but understand we may change our minds

BURIAL/CREMATION

In New Jersey, all babies born at or after 20 weeks gestation require a “final disposition”, or final arrangements for your baby after birth.

Final disposition options include burial, cremation or hospital disposition. Your care team can explain the options available at your hospital, and may be able to provide a list of funeral homes in your area.

Some families choose to hold a funeral or memorial service soon after delivery, while others decide on a private ceremony, delayed service, or no formal service. Your religious or spiritual leader can be a source of guidance and support in this decision.

If finances are a concern, financial assistance may be available to those that qualify. Your care team can explain the options that may be available to you.

Decisions regarding final arrangements can be daunting. In general, these decisions can be made after your baby’s birth. Ask your care team about your hospital’s policies and procedures regarding final disposition.

CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH RESULTING IN STILLBIRTH

The New Jersey Division of Vital Statistics will create a Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth for your baby. Complete a Request to Place on File a Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth (Solicitud para Archivar un Registro de Partida de Nacimiento Resultando en Parto Muerto) and mail it to the address at the top of the form along with payment. <https://www.nj.gov/health/forms/reg-68.pdf> It may take 6-8 weeks to receive your baby’s Certificate.

ADDITIONAL BIRTH PLANNING INFORMATION

Still Birth Day <https://stillbirthday.org>

