

This document will help guide and inform your birth planning process. This includes:

- Resources frequently used by Michigan Medicine midwives
- Tips from labor & delivery nurses
- Information on standard midwifery care for low-risk birth

Standard midwifery care

This section explains our standard midwifery care practices for all low-risk births. Having this information will help you to know where to concentrate your effort and research while building your birth plan.

We sincerely want to partner with you and your family for an optimal birth experience. We believe that promoting the physiologic (natural) labor and birth process is best for healthy mothers and healthy babies. We also carefully use therapies in situations that promote the health and well-being of mothers and babies.

For women with an uncomplicated pregnancy and normally progressing labor our routine care includes:

- Regular fetal monitoring
- No IV access or saline lock access (no IV fluids)
- Encouraging you to:
 - Drink fluids to stay well hydrated
 - Find positions that are most comfortable for you (including use of birth balls, birth stool, chairs, bed, shower, water immersion in tub)
 - Move, including walking in the room and in the hallways
- Individualized 1-to-1 nursing care
- Minimizing vaginal exams to only essential decision-making situations (like admission during labor and confirming complete dilation)

- Encouraging doula support
- Immediate skin-to-skin contact for babies and mothers right at birth
- Delayed cord clamping
- Breastfeeding support from nurses, midwives and lactation consultants as needed

There are some diagnoses or conditions that might change our ability to offer all aspects of this routine midwifery care. Please discuss this with your midwife in clinic.

We look forward to developing a relationship with you based on shared decision-making and mutual respect. We are genuinely invested in you and your family. If we need to make changes that differ from our standard care for your safety, we will make these difficult decisions with you.

How can I learn more about birth planning?

The first thing to do is to start researching your options when it comes to planning your birth. There are many websites and templates available on the internet for this purpose. It is helpful to discuss this information with your care provider as well. Below you will find some links to resources recommended by Michigan Medicine midwives and labor & delivery nurses.

“Share With Women” from the American College of Nurse Midwives

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/2u33ajy6>

Share With Women is a series of patient education handouts from the Journal of Midwifery & Women’s Health (JMWH). This website includes multiple articles on labor & birth including one on writing birth plans (see link below).

Writing a Birth Plan: <https://tinyurl.com/yz3tfa69>

Michigan Medicine Birth Partnership document

Link: <http://www.med.umich.edu/1libr/Gyn/BirthPartnership.pdf>

This document is a great starting place for ideas of things to think about when it comes to building your birth plan and was developed by Michigan Medicine midwives and doctors.

Maras World Planning Guides

Link: <http://www.marasworld.com/planning-guides/>

This website has multiple resources for starting the birth planning process including tips on how your partner can support you during the birth process and a fillable/printable birth plan template. This website is operated by one of our Michigan Medicine midwives and included with her permission.

Evidence Based Birth

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/729mmhfs>

This website includes research on some topics frequently included in birth plans and can be a good resource for more information when making decisions surrounding these topics.

Michigan Medicine: Care Guides from Your Clinician

Link: <https://careguides.med.umich.edu/pregnancy-childbirth>

Care Guides From Your Clinician is a searchable database for patients. It is updated and maintained with current patient care information from Michigan Medicine experts and other organizations. There is great information here about pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding and beyond. Use the search box to find what you need then click the title to open and print.

Practical tips & tricks: from your labor & delivery nurse

A key member of your birth team is your labor & delivery nurse(s). During active labor you will have a nurse who is assigned to care for only you. These nurses are trained and experienced in supporting birthing people and have lots of knowledge.

They can also be an advocate for you and make sure that your preferences are heard and carried out if possible. The following tips include ways to write your birth plan so that it is most effective and easy to read. It also includes items to include as recommended by our labor & delivery nurses.

- Consider formatting your birth plan into a list of bullet points or icons/pictures rather than paragraphs
- Limit the total page length of your birth plan to no more than 2 pages.
- Consider including your preferences for unplanned situations such as:
 - Cesarean (c-section)
 - Excess bleeding
 - If your baby needs extra care
 - If your baby needs to be separated from you after birth
- Include any cultural/religious traditions or practices that are important during your labor, birth or with baby

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Author: GiGi Sutton, RN
Reviewers: Anne Rosa, CNM
Edited by: Karelyn Munro BA

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 04/2021