



Nurturing Your Journey

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A GUIDE FROM MY DOULA DAWN

Your Birth Plan Made *Simple*

Template + Real Hospital Birth Example

A birth plan isn't about controlling every detail — it's about knowing your options and communicating them clearly. This guide gives you a fillable, one-page template plus a real example from a hospital birth, so you walk in prepared and confident.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- ★ A simple, fillable birth plan template
- ★ A real hospital birth plan example
- ★ If/then language that keeps you flexible
- ★ How to share your plan with your care team
- ★ What to include (and what to leave out)

START HERE

Why a Birth Plan Matters (And How to Use This One)

A birth plan isn't a script your team has to follow line by line — it's a conversation starter. It tells your provider and nurses who you are, what matters to you, and where you'd like some flexibility. The best birth plans are short, clear, and easy to scan in the middle of a busy shift change.

♦ KNOW YOUR PREFERENCES FIRST

Before you fill anything out, sit with your partner and talk through these questions.

- ♦ Where do I want to give birth? (Hospital, birth center, home)
- ♦ Who do I want there? (Partner, doula, family, friends)
- ♦ How do I want to manage pain? (Epidural, nitrous oxide, natural techniques)
- ♦ What interventions am I comfortable with? (Induction, monitoring, assisted delivery)
- ♦ What are my preferences for pushing and delivery? (Positions, coaching, delayed cord clamping)
- ♦ What newborn procedures do I want, or not want? (Eye ointment, vitamin K, circumcision)

♦ KEEP IT SIMPLE

- ♦ One page. Nobody reads a five-page birth plan in active labor.
- ♦ Use bullet points, not paragraphs — easy to scan at a glance.
- ♦ Focus on your top priorities, not every possible scenario.

♦ **Dawn's Tip:** *Think of your birth plan as a way to be known, not a way to control the outcome. Birth is unpredictable — the plan is there to guide decisions, not replace them.*

MAKE IT WORK

Use "If/Then" Language, Then Share It Early

Birth doesn't always go as planned. Instead of making rigid demands, use "if/then" statements so you stay in control of the conversation, no matter what happens.

Instead of:

- ✦ "I do NOT want an epidural."
- ✦ "I refuse all interventions."

Try:

- ✦ "I prefer to labor without pain medication, but if I request one, please help me understand my options first."
- ✦ "I'd like to avoid interventions unless medically necessary. If one is recommended, I'd like to discuss risks, benefits, and alternatives before deciding."

✦ **Dawn's Tip:** You can still have strong preferences — just frame them in a way that invites collaboration, not conflict.

✦ SHARE IT BEFORE YOU'RE IN LABOR

Your birth plan is only effective if your birth team actually knows about it.

- ✦ Your OB/midwife, at a prenatal visit — ideally before 36 weeks
- ✦ Your doula, if you have one
- ✦ Your partner or support person, so they can advocate for you
- ✦ The nurses or staff at the hospital or birth center

✦ **Dawn's Tip:** Pack two printed copies in your hospital bag — one for your nurse to keep in your chart, one for your partner to reference.

FILL IT OUT

Your Birth Plan Template

Part 1 of 2

♦ MY SUPPORT TEAM

- ♦ Birth partner(s): _____
- ♦ Doula: _____
- ♦ Anyone else I'd like present: _____

♦ DURING LABOR

- ♦ I'd like to move freely and change positions as much as possible.
- ♦ I'd like intermittent monitoring if it's medically appropriate.
- ♦ I'd like the lights kept low and noise kept to a minimum.
- ♦ I'd like to eat and drink lightly if I'm able to.
- ♦ Other preferences: _____

♦ PAIN RELIEF

- ♦ I'd like to try natural coping techniques first (movement, water, breathing).
- ♦ I'm open to an epidural if I request one — please don't offer unless I ask.
- ♦ I'd like to know all pain relief options before choosing.

♦ **Dawn's Tip:** "If/then" statements are your friend: "If I ask for pain medication, then please offer me the least invasive option first." This shows flexibility while still stating your preference.

FILL IT OUT

Your Birth Plan Template

Part 2 of 2

✦ PUSHING & DELIVERY

- ✦ I'd like to push in whatever position feels most effective, not just on my back.
- ✦ I'd like to try pushing spontaneously (following my body's urges) rather than on a count.
- ✦ I'd like a mirror / to touch my baby's head as they crown (if I want this).

✦ IF A C-SECTION IS NEEDED

- ✦ I'd like my birth partner present, if medically possible.
- ✦ I'd like a clear drape or the drape lowered as baby is born, if available.
- ✦ I'd like immediate skin-to-skin in the OR or recovery, if baby is stable.
- ✦ I'd like delayed cord clamping, if medically appropriate.

✦ RIGHT AFTER BIRTH

- ✦ I'd like immediate, uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact.
- ✦ I'd like delayed cord clamping (1–3+ minutes, or until it stops pulsing).
- ✦ Newborn procedures (weighing, eye ointment, vitamin K) can wait until after our first hour together.
- ✦ Feeding plan: _____

A note about flexibility:

- ✦ This plan reflects my preferences — I understand my care team may need to adapt it.

In a true emergency:

- ✦ Please make the decision that keeps me and my baby safe, and explain it to us as soon as you can.

SEE IT IN ACTION

A Real Hospital Birth Plan Example

Here's a real, filled-out example from a first-time mom planning a hospital birth. Notice how short and specific it is — this is exactly what you'd hand your nurse at check-in.

Support Team *Who's in the room***ON THE PLAN:**

- ✦ Husband (Jake) and doula (Maria) present for labor and delivery.

During Labor *Movement & environment***ON THE PLAN:**

- ✦ Would like to labor in the shower/tub if available and move freely between contractions.
- ✦ Prefers dim lighting and minimal interruptions early in labor.

Pain Relief *Preferences, not restrictions***ON THE PLAN:**

- ✦ Wants to try natural coping first. Open to an epidural if she asks — please don't offer first.

Right After Birth *The first hour***ON THE PLAN:**

- ✦ Immediate skin-to-skin. Delayed cord clamping until it stops pulsing. Breastfeeding within the first hour; newborn procedures can wait.

✦ **Notice:** No paragraph is longer than two lines. Nothing here demands a specific outcome — it simply states preferences and asks for a conversation first. That's what makes a birth plan usable in the middle of a busy shift.

Work with Dawn: Visit mydouladawn.com to book a free 15-minute call or get the Newborn Sleep Blueprint.

Birth Preferences



Name: _____

Due Date: _____

Birth Partner: _____

ATMOSPHERE

- ☐ Quiet
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Dim lights
- ☐ Wear my own clothes
- ☐ Limited staff (no students)
- ☐ Minimal interruptions
- ☐ Limited cervical exams
- ☐ Let water break on its own
- ☐ Other: _____

PAIN MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Bath / shower
- ☐ Breathing techniques
- ☐ Massage
- ☐ Aromatherapy
- ☐ Hypnobirthing
- ☐ Movement
- ☐ Other: _____

PAIN MEDICATION

- ☐ Please don't offer
- ☐ I might try narcotics
- ☐ I may choose an epidural
- ☐ I might try a TENS unit
- ☐ Other: _____

DELIVERY

PLANNED AS

- ☐ Vaginal
- ☐ VBAC
- ☐ C-section
- ☐ Water birth

PUSHING

- ☐ Breathe baby down
- ☐ Coached to push
- ☐ No coached pushing
- ☐ Use a mirror
- ☐ No forceps / vacuum if possible
- ☐ Tear naturally
- ☐ Feel baby's head crowning
- ☐ Other: _____

BIRTH POSITIONS

- ☐ Birth ball
- ☐ Squatting
- ☐ On side
- ☐ Birth stool
- ☐ In bed
- ☐ Standing
- ☐ All-fours
- ☐ Bath
- ☐ Other: _____

AFTER DELIVERY

CORD CLAMPING

- ☐ Cord stops pulsating
- ☐ After _____ minutes

UMBILICAL CORD CUT BY

- ☐ Partner
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Myself
- ☐ Staff

AFTER DELIVERY

DELIVERY OF PLACENTA

- ☐ Naturally
- ☐ Managed with injection

CORD BLOOD

- ☐ Collected as prearranged
- ☐ Not collected

HOLDING BABY

- ☐ Skin to skin right away
- ☐ Wipe baby first

FEEDING PLAN

- ☐ Breast
- ☐ Expressed breast milk
- ☐ Bottle

MEDICATIONS FOR BABY

- ☐ As advised
- ☐ None
- ☐ Please ask first

HEALTH INFORMATION

- ☐ Group B strep
- ☐ Gestational diabetes
- ☐ Herpes
- ☐ RH incompatibility
- ☐ Allergies: _____
- ☐ Conditions that can affect birth: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

Additional Notes

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