

## **Birth plan**

A birth plan is a document in which you state your wishes regarding the delivery. A birth plan is a communication tool. The plan must be simple, clear and concise. The plan will be kept at the chart of the midwife and / or in the medical chart of the hospital.

### **Why a birth plan?**

A childbirth regularly does not happen as imagined. During a delivery there can be a lack of time to extensively discuss a situation. Writing a birth plan can help you prepare for the delivery. Find out what you feel is important, what your wishes and ideas are and how you would like to be treated. It is a way for you and your health care providers to understand each other better. This will benefit the cooperation during the delivery.

### **The various aspects of a birth plan.**

#### **Experiences from a previous childbirth**

If a previous delivery was difficult, this could be a stress factor for a next delivery. Positive experiences can strengthen you in the upcoming birth. What are your experiences?

#### **The surroundings of your delivery**

You cannot always choose where you want to deliver. You can specify here what you enjoy and how to make your surroundings feel comfortable and homelike (think light, sound, atmosphere, attendees).

#### **Posture**

During the delivery it is usually possible to take the posture you like the most, even if the delivery takes place at the hospital. It is not always possible to determine beforehand how you can handle the contractions the best way. You can specify here if you have experience with certain positions, or if you have wishes regarding posture.

#### **Guidance and communication**

It may happen that the health care provider that has guided you during the pregnancy will not be present during the delivery, but that another health care provider will guide you. It is also possible to encounter health care providers in training, what can result in having to do certain actions twice. It is important they you are aware and clear about the things that are happening and why they are happening. If something is unclear for you, please feel free to ask for a clarification. We feel that a clear communication between you, your partner and the health care provider(s) is important.

Who might be present during the delivery and what do you expect from the guidance of the midwife?

#### **Childbirth education classes**

It is recommended to follow childbirth education classes. Check our website or ask your midwife for more information.

### **Wishes regarding dealing with contraction pain**

The pain from contraction is often handled well through the use of proper breathing, relaxation techniques, trust and concentration. The presence of and coaching by a trusted person (such as a partner / friend) is very important. A comfortable posture, massages, heat (think hot water bottle / shower or bath) can also help.

There may be times that this does not help enough anymore; even if you have tried all tips and tricks. The hospital is the only place where the pain can be treated with medication. The brochure on pain treatment from the KNOV has good information about this subject. Your ideas on how to handle pain can be stated in the birth plan document.

### **About the delivery / other aspects**

All midwives have been trained to make sure your delivery will be as natural as possible. If you have ideas regarding this subject, you can state them in the birth plan document. You can think about topics like who will cut the umbilical cord, what you want to do with the placenta, who you want to take pictures and what kind of pictures and the like.

If the childbirth is uncomplicated, there will be enough time to recover and to respect the wishes of the parents. However, sometimes there is some urgency and it could be decided to perform an action which does not fit the wishes of the parents. This will always be explained and justified (in very urgent cases this can only be done afterwards). Yet it still is important to think about how you feel about the delivery and how you would like certain things to be handled. The birth plan can be discussed with one of us during the next time appointment you have with us.

This is the birth plan of:

What would I want during dilation?

Think about (for example):

- \* Atmosphere
- \* Attendees
- \* Light
- \* Sound
- \* Dealing with the pain

What would I want during pushing?

Think about (for example):

- \* Taking pictures
- \* Atmosphere
- \* Attendees
- \* Posture (sitting on the birth stool, hands and knees, standing up, in bath...)

What would I want after the baby is born?

Think about (for example):

- \* Having the naked baby on your naked skin (belly) right after birth
- \* Cutting the umbilical cord
- \* Placenta
- \* Photo's
- \* Attendees
- \* Nutrition