

Creating Your Birth Preferences

A Simple Guide for Building a Flexible Birth Plan

A birth preferences document is a communication tool—not a contract. It helps your healthcare team understand what matters most to you while recognizing that birth can take unexpected turns.

Tips for Writing Your Birth Preferences

- Keep your birth preferences to one page whenever possible so they are easy for your care team to review.
- Use short bullet points instead of long paragraphs.
- Focus on what you hope for rather than listing only what you want to avoid.
- Research your options ahead of time so your preferences are based on informed decisions.
- Share important personal information that may affect your care, such as previous birth experiences, anxiety, trauma history, sensory preferences, or communication needs.
- Review your birth preferences with your provider, doula, partner, or support people before labor begins.
- Bring several printed copies with you to your birth location and keep a digital copy on your phone.
- If there is a possibility of a cesarean birth, consider creating a separate page with your cesarean preferences so your wishes remain clear if plans change.
- Remember that flexibility is a strength. The goal is not a perfect birth plan—it is thoughtful preparation and informed decision-making.

Questions to Consider

- What environment helps you feel calm and supported?
- Who would you like present during labor and birth?
- What comfort measures or pain management options are important to you?
- How would you like decisions to be discussed if plans change?
- What are your newborn preferences (skin-to-skin, delayed cord clamping, feeding, routine newborn care)?

Llamamma Tip: Your birth preferences should start conversations, not end them. The best birth plans combine preparation with flexibility and informed decision-making.