

HINTS FOR A GOOD BIRTH PLAN

Keep it simple and don't restate the obvious - don't waste space with 'no shave, no enema' since those aren't routine around here anymore and can be discussed if it comes up. It is really important to know what is routine for your practice and hospital so you know if a priority of yours goes against the routines - then make SURE to include it AND discuss it ahead of time with the practice.

Keep it to one page - a 'bullet' format is also recommend - with an introductory paragraph that states your overriding wishes for as natural an experience as possible, and thanks the birth team and compliments them - maybe an ending 'thanks' paragraph as well.

Don't scare the birth team - Put 'PRIMARY goal is Healthy Mom, Healthy Baby' at the top. Use 'assuming no complications' or 'assuming a healthy mom and baby' etc. in each point so the team knows that you are not going to be arguing about not wanting an IV if there really is a true emergency arising that requires a c-sec. Of course this may vary from point to point. Don't put 'assuming a healthy baby' on the points where you say 'no circ' or 'mom and/or dad to remain with baby at all times,' for example.

Keep language positive and team-oriented - state your wishes, not making demands - not 'No IV' but 'In the absence of a medical complication, we prefer to labor without an IV to help freedom of mobility for the mother. We will stay hydrated with icechips..., ' etc.

Do a separate plan for mom and baby (for the reasons you stated). Again, know what is routine for newborn care and if what they want goes against that (no nursery time, extended bonding before eyedrops, no eyedrops, whatever...), get a pediatrician AHEAD of time that will approve those things if the baby is healthy, and sign off on the birth plan.

Also, it's not always a good idea to put 'The Bradley Method' on the birth plan - this can be a real turn-off for a lot of MDs and nurses who get the major eyeroll going when you say Bradley. Just put that you desire and have prepared for an 'un-medicated' or 'natural' birth rather than 'We took BRADLEY classes - aren't you thrilled?!!!??' in the intro paragraph.

Finally, make sure to personalize your plan. Getting a form off the internet and saying 'this is our birth plan' could really insult a practitioner dealing with a couple who is saying they want to be treated as individuals, but hands them a 'form letter' birth plan. Those websites are great for getting ideas and figuring out what your options are, but are not good for a final product.