



Choosing Your Care Provider & Birth Location

"If you don't know what options you have, you don't have any". Diana Korte

Choosing the place of birth for your baby - It is incredibly important that you understand where you fit best prior to choosing where to birth your baby. Take hospital and/or birth center tour, call and talk to L&D floor, get facts on home birth by talking to home birth midwives, other moms who have had home births, online and in books.

- Does the location offer what is most important to you (tubs, birth balls, wearing own clothing, intermittent monitoring, etc.)?
- What are standard protocols that are followed?
- Is water birth available?
- Are birthing stools or non-reclined pushing and delivery positions encouraged?
- What is the no/low intervention rate?
- What is the induction, epidural, cesarean rate? Are VBAC's supported?
- Are mom and baby friendly practices used? (no routine interventions, no separation of mom and baby, breastfeeding is the norm, movement in labor is utilized, etc.)

Points to Ponder afterward -

- Will I be able to have the type of birth I truly desire?
- What location will I ultimately feel most comfortable in?
- What location is ultimately safest for my specific needs (I am currently low-risk or high risk)?
- Is insurance or lack of it the reason I am choosing the location?
- Do I have realistic expectations for the location?
- Am I willing to take responsibility for my birth in the location?
- Is staff open to working with a doula?
- Is staff willing to work with natural childbirth practices?
- Are there any compelling reasons to choose one location over another?

Choosing your care provider: Use this as a template for the interview process or to discern you are of the same philosophy and belief system with current CP.

- What is birth philosophy? What is philosophy of pregnancy?
- Has provider seen normal labor and birth? How often?
- How is the "due date" approached? When is "overdue"?
- Will questions be answered over the phone?
- How much time will be spent with me during each appointment?
- What if I hire a doula? Are there restrictions on the doula I may hire? If yes, why?
- Are there restrictions on the type of childbirth or breastfeeding class? If so, what and why?
- What routine tests are utilized during pregnancy? What if I decline these tests?
- What are intervention rates? (IV, AROM, continuous monitoring, episiotomy, etc.) Cesarean rate? VBAC rate? Induction rate? What induction methods are used? When are forceps/vacuum used?
- What positions is care provider comfortable catching in? Birth stool? Hand/Knees? Squatting? Standing?
- If I choose an epidural, when can I get it or when is it too late?
- What about a birth plan? Will desires be put into my file at the hospital so the nurse and/or back-up will know what has been agreed to? Is an on call rotation utilized or does CP attend all own patients? If there are partners or an on call rotation, do EACH of the others share in the same birth philosophy and approach to birth?
- Are there any protocols that are non-negotiable?
- What if I choose to decline something after careful consideration?

Points to ponder afterward:

- Did you feel immediately comfortable at the interview? If already with a CP, do you feel comfortable and heard at each appointment?
- Was or is care provider willing to answer questions in detail without being annoyed?
- Is choosing your care provider based on your insurance or lack of insurance?
- What are you willing to do in order to have the birth you really desire? Birth location?
- How much responsibility are you willing to take for the health care decisions for you and your baby?