

Birth Preferences Workbook



WENTWORTH-DOUGLASS
HOSPITAL

A Mass General Community Hospital

WOMEN & CHILDREN'S CENTER

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GETTING TO KNOW US

Welcome to the Women & Children's Center at Wentworth-Douglass Hospital. Preparing for a new baby is an exciting time! We realize that it can also be overwhelming, so the team at the Wentworth-Douglass Hospital Women & Children's Center wants to help you in feeling prepared, comfortable and confident as you embark on this amazing journey. We thank you for choosing us to be a part of this experience. If you haven't already, we encourage you to download our free Seacoast Babies app.

This information packet is a way to help you begin thinking about your options in birth. As you read through each section please make notes of any questions or clarifications you need. You can then use this packet to engage in conversation with your provider during your appointments. You can also bring this with you to childbirth classes and we can address many of your questions there.

Our wish is to honor your preferences for your birth experience. We feel it is important to remind you that in some situations, the health of you or your baby may necessitate flexibility. When time allows, you will be consulted by a nurse and/or your doctor or midwife if a change of plan is indicated.

I AM PREPARED

We encourage all of our families to take Childbirth Classes and any other classes that may help you feel confident as you begin this next chapter of your life.

We offer the following classes to consider:

- Adjusting with Ease - A workshop for expecting parents
- Prepared Childbirth Class – *weeknight and weekend classes are available*
- Kriya Birth – Designed for people hoping for a non-medicated birth experience
- Prenatal Yoga
- Breastfeeding Class
- Great Beginnings/Newborn Care Class
- Infant Massage Class
- Intro to Foods & Healthy Homes

A full listing, descriptions and cost can be found on our website at wdhospital.org/childbirthed or on the Seacoast Babies app.

* Many insurance companies will reimburse for Childbirth Education costs.

In addition to classes we offer weekly Pregnancy Circles. Join us at one of those to meet others and ask questions to help you prepare for the birth of your baby.

Portions of this workbook were created utilizing content from "My Birth Day Wishes" - a publication available to patients at the Women's Health & Childbirth Center at Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northhampton Massachusetts.

I AM COMFORTABLE

Knowing what we offer and expressing your personal desires helps us know how to help you be as comfortable as possible during your stay.

Early Labor

Early labor is sometimes a lengthy process. During this time we encourage you to rest or move freely, change positions, eat light snacks and drink lots of clear liquids. In most circumstances, home is a much better place for early labor. Tips for managing early labor at home can be found on the app. Do not be discouraged if after being evaluated at the hospital, you are encouraged to return home. Occasionally, a medication can be provided to help you rest. If you are planning to use alternative treatments and /or therapies to assist with initiating labor or helping it progress, please list them below and discuss with your provider in advance.

Thoughts or questions?

When it's time to deliver

When it's time to settle in to the Women & Children's Center, know it's time to be pampered. All of our birthing rooms are private and spacious and have showers, refrigerators, television, wifi and comfortable sleeping couches for family. For safety and security, all entrances to the Women & Children's Center are locked. Visitors are invited in with your permission and security cameras monitor the hallways. We encourage you to bring personal items to help create a relaxing environment personalized to you. Many people choose to listen to relaxing music, wear comfortable clothing, or dim the lights. You may invite friends and family to be in the room with you during your labor. We also have a lovely waiting area for those you prefer to have wait outside. You will stay in the same room for labor, delivery and postpartum. An exception to this may occur if you have a cesarean section (see information later in this guide).

Eating and Drinking

Unless otherwise directed for medical reasons we will encourage you to continue to drink fluids and stay well hydrated. You may also bring your own drinks, but we do provide water, juice, broth, tea, Jell-O, and ice chips. We also encourage you to eat small snacks if you feel hungry unless otherwise directed. We have nourishment centers with toast, English muffins, Popsicles, pudding and crackers. Your support people may bring their own food and beverages or purchase them in our cafeteria or the waterfall café located in the hospital's main lobby. We do make coffee on the unit for partners and support people to enjoy. If you are scheduled for an induction or a cesarean section, talk with your provider about what you may eat or drink and when that may need to be discontinued.

Thoughts or questions?

Monitoring

When you arrive, we will start listening to your baby's heart rate with an external monitor, and will do so continuously for 20-40 minutes. After that, we will monitor your baby's heart rate on and off throughout your labor. Sometimes, continuous monitoring becomes medically necessary. Monitors are available that will allow you to walk around, change position and to safely use the shower or jacuzzi.

Thoughts or questions?

Making Progress in Labor

Every labor is different and some can take a long time. If labor is progressing slowly, your nurse, doula or provider can offer suggestions on how to encourage progress. Certain positions such as walking, squatting and sitting upright are helpful for the progress of labor. If labor stops progressing, you may need additional help, such as breaking the bag of water or using pitocin - a uterine stimulant to induce labor. Pitocin is similar to oxytocin, the hormone your body produces during labor. If this is necessary, we start pitocin at the lowest dose and gradually increase it while monitoring you and the baby. If indicated, your care provider will discuss this more completely with you.

Thoughts or questions?

Labor Comfort

There are many ways to work with your labor. Here is list of some things you may want to try: Please circle all that seem appealing to you and share them with your partner, provider and care team:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| <i>Hold my hand</i> | <i>Change positions</i> | <i>self-hypnosis</i> |
| <i>light touch/effleurage</i> | <i>walking</i> | <i>ice chips</i> |
| <i>inward focus</i> | <i>massage by partner or doula</i> | <i>squatting</i> |
| <i>soft lighting</i> | <i>focal point</i> | <i>slow dance</i> |
| <i>music</i> | <i>distraction</i> | <i>use of the birth ball</i> |
| <i>family support reassurance</i> | <i>rocking chair</i> | <i>moaning/sound</i> |
| <i>encouragement</i> | <i>water -jacuzzi tub</i> | <i>shower</i> |
| <i>sitting on toilet</i> | <i>using calm or patterned breathing</i> | |

Thoughts or questions?

Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy is used to help improve your sense of well being. It can aid in easing symptoms like pain, nausea and anxiety. Our oils are hospital grade and offered in the form of personal inhalers. Diffusers are not allowed in the hospital.

Pain Medication

Labor is a natural — although challenging — process. We realize that many women feel differently about the use of pain relief medications for labor. We will respect and encourage your preferences.

Please choose the sentence that best describes your feelings about pain relief medications in labor.

- I want to give birth without using any pain relief medication.
- I would like to labor without pain relief medication, but if I feel overwhelmed I may choose to use pain relief medication.
- I would like to have pain relief medication as early as possible in my labor.
- Other _____

There are many ways we can approach your options for pain relief. Below are some ways to think about it. Talk about this with your provider, care team and family and let us know how you would like us to handle this topic upon your arrival:

- I do not want to discuss pain medication in labor. If I decide that I want medication, I will ask.
- When I arrive at the hospital, tell me about all of my options for pain relief medication. If I decide later that I want medication, I will ask for it.
- When I arrive at the hospital, tell me about my options for pain relief medication. Remind me about my options as my labor progresses.
- I want to know as soon as possible when my choice of pain relief medication is available.

Thoughts or questions?

At Wentworth-Douglass, we offer three options for pain relief. All medications have benefits and risks. Your care provider will talk with you about them before you make a decision.

1. A rapid acting short-term narcotic, either IV or an injection. This may make you feel sleepy
2. Epidural anesthesia. An anesthesiologist provides epidural medication. With an epidural you will have an IV and your blood pressure will be monitored closely. Your baby's heart rate will be monitored continuously. You will not be able to walk around and you may not feel the urge to urinate. If this happens you may need a catheter to empty your bladder.
3. Nitrous Oxide. Nitrous Oxide is breathed in through a face mask. Nitrous Oxide can be given at any time during labor, but is most likely administered during active labor and discontinued once a woman is pushing.

Which of these options are important for you?

Jacuzzi Tub

For women who want to labor in water, we do have a Jacuzzi-style whirlpool tub available to you. Water creates a feeling of buoyancy that provides gentle support and relieves some of the stresses of gravity. Warm water can help relieve pain and can encourage relaxation while allowing you to move more freely than you would out of water. You can move more gently into the laboring or birthing position that is right for you. Sometimes partners join the mother in the tub to physically support her during labor. Partners need to wear a bathing suit in the tub.

Thoughts or questions?

It's Time to Push

We will encourage you to follow your body's lead and to use natural breathing rhythm. We will provide guidance, as needed. Be prepared for us to encourage position changes during pushing. Some positions we try may include squatting, sitting in bed, side-lying, sitting on a birth stool, kneeling and forward leaning. Vacuum extractors and forceps are not routinely used at Wentworth-Douglass Hospital, however, there are some circumstances in which your care provider may recommend their use.

Thoughts or questions?

Episiotomy

Most births do not require an episiotomy therefore episiotomies are not routinely done at Wentworth-Douglass Hospital. Warm compresses and mineral oil may be used to help avoid an episiotomy. In some cases your provider may recommend an episiotomy to avoid tearing at the time of birth. Depending on the tear, stitches may or may not be needed. Stitches are always necessary after an episiotomy.

Thoughts or questions?

Induction of Labor

Sometimes during pregnancy, conditions arise which warrant induction of labor. This means giving medication to start labor, rather than waiting for spontaneous labor. At WDH 1 out of 3 patients have their labors induced, which is similar to the national average. A few common reasons for induction include diabetes, hypertension, ruptured membranes, and being past your due date. Your provider will talk with you about induction if it is recommended, and the benefits and risks of induction.

The length of time from starting an induction until your baby is born can vary from a few hours to a few days, depending on your situation. This does not mean you will be in active labor for a long time, only that it can sometimes take time to initiate labor. Being prepared for some waiting can help you feel less anxious. Your provider may be able to give you an idea of an expected timeline given your individual situation.

Just like natural labor, sometimes induced labors end with cesarean delivery rather than vaginal delivery. It is less common for induction not to work at all, meaning that even after plenty of time and various methods, labor doesn't begin. If induction isn't working, you and your provider will have a discussion about what to do next.

Commonly used methods of induction are medications used for cervical ripening, medications used to cause uterine contractions, a cervical balloon used for cervical ripening, and rupture of membranes to trigger labor. Your provider will discuss methods for your situation and what might work best, making a decision with your consent.

Thoughts or Questions:

Cesarean Birth

Should your birth experience include a C-section, rest assured that you won't need to go far. The C-section surgical room is located right in the Women & Children's Center. In most cases you will remain fully alert and your support person can remain with you for the birth. Your baby will be brought to you as soon as possible. You will often be able to touch and get to know your baby while still in the surgical room. Your support partner will also be able to hold the baby as long as the baby is in good health.

Thoughts or questions?

Observers/Students at Your Labor and Birth

Nursing students from local colleges train at our hospital during the school year. Your labor nurse will ask for your consent before involving a nursing student in your care. Whether to include a student in your care is entirely up to you.

Immediately Following Birth

Following a vaginal birth, your baby is usually placed on your abdomen or chest to begin the bonding process. In most circumstances, your support person may cut the umbilical cord if they choose. Following the birth, your baby stays with you so that parents and baby can get to know each other in a quiet environment. The baby will often show cues that he or she is ready to feed and this is a great time to begin the feeding relationship. We encourage skin-to-skin contact, holding your baby on your bare chest . A blanket will be placed over both of you for warmth. If your providers have any concern about your health or that of your baby, this may change the course of action.

Thoughts or questions?

Do you have religious, cultural, or spiritual preferences that you would like to include in your birth experience? _____

I AM CONFIDENT

Postpartum Care

The postpartum period is a time to rest and recover from birth. It is also a time for you and your baby to learn about each other. We encourage 24 hour-rooming-in so that mother (and partner) and baby are together throughout their stay. Our nurses look forward to helping you learn to take care of yourself and your baby. Friends and family will be excited to visit you and meet your new baby, but we also encourage time without visitors so you can rest and recover. We have a Family Rest Time from 1:00-3:00pm each day. We will dim the lights on the unit, and we encourage visitors to stay home during that time so all of our families can have some quiet time.

Thoughts or questions?

Special words about Breastfeeding:

In the first couple of hours, babies often have a strong urge to nurse. This is a great time to put baby to breast. Your nurse will help you to begin to breastfeed your baby. Our team of lactation specialists is available to help you as well and can answer any questions or concerns you may have. It is a natural feeling to be anxious if it takes time for both you and baby to learn. Holding your baby skin to skin is a great way for your baby to begin to get to know you and figure out his/her part in the breastfeeding relationship. We encourage all women interested in breastfeeding to take our breastfeeding class. If you're still unsure about your feeding decision this is a great opportunity to learn more about breastfeeding your baby.

Lactation Services

All of our nurses are skilled at supporting you in beginning the breastfeeding relationship. A lactation consultant will also visit with you as often as needed to ensure that you are feeling confident in the breastfeeding relationship. Our lactation consultants are available to you after you have gone home if additional support is desired.

Routine Newborn Procedures

Routine newborn procedures are done within the first hour after birth. Many of these procedures can be delayed until after the first feeding. Sometimes, a baby may have to go to the Special Care Nursery - located just steps away from your room - for additional care. If this is the case you can accompany your baby as soon as you are ready. Your partner is able to accompany your baby right away.

Routine procedures at Wentworth-Douglass Hospital include:

- On-going assessment of baby, including taking baby's temperature and breathing rate
- Weighing, measuring, footprints, security bands, security picture
- Antibiotic eye ointment
- Vitamin K shot
- Hepatitis B vaccination is recommended prior to discharge
- Hearing screening
- PKU test after 24 hours (blood test)
- Non-invasive cardiac screening
- Bilirubin screening (skin test) - If indicated a blood draw may be necessary for further evaluation
- Baby bath - this can be done right in your room

Thoughts or Questions?

Your stay at the Women & Children's Center

Insurance companies generally pay for mother and baby postpartum care in the hospital for up to 48 hours after a vaginal birth and 96 hours after a cesarean birth. A doctor or midwife from your obstetrical practice will visit you each day at the hospital. On the day that you are going home, your care provider will medically discharge you to go home. S/he will also tell you when to make a follow-up visit at the office. A pediatrician will assess your baby's health each day that you are in the hospital. On the day that you are going home, the pediatrician will medically discharge your baby. Some women prefer to return home earlier than the time allowed by insurance. If you would like to go home early, be sure to tell your nurse so that your care provider and the pediatrician will be prepared to medically discharge you and your baby. If mother and baby go home before 24 hours after the birth, your pediatrician will want your baby to be seen by a medical professional within 24 hours of returning home. It is important for the baby to have necessary blood work done and to check that the baby is doing well. The pediatrician may advise you to have a home visit from a visiting nurse. The pediatrician may also want you to bring your baby to their office to be examined.

Thoughts or questions?

Maternal Newborn Follow-up Nurse Visit

Patients of Wentworth-Douglass Hospital can receive a visit in their home from one of our Maternal Newborn nurses a few days after discharge. The Maternal Newborn nurses are skilled in caring for new mothers and babies. During this appointment, your nurse will address any concerns you have, assist with breastfeeding issues, and answer questions about your health and your baby's health.

Support Services After You Return Home

There are many services available to families here at Wentworth-Douglass Hospital and in the greater Seacoast Community. We offer a New Parent Support Group which meets on most Fridays from 1:30 – 3pm, and a support group for those dealing with anxiety or depression on Thursdays at 11:00am. If you are in need of specific services we will be sure to connect you.

We're here for you.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this. Again, it is our wish to honor your preferences for your birth experience. In some situations, the health of you or your baby may necessitate flexibility. When time allows you will be consulted by a nurse and/or your doctor or midwife if a change of plan is indicated. We look forward to working together with you to make your birth experience something you remember fondly for years to come.

Our very best wishes for a healthy and enjoyable pregnancy. We look forward to meeting you and being a part of this very special day in your lives. Should you have any questions about Wentworth-Douglass Hospital's Women & Children's Center, please feel free to contact our Maternal/Child Resource office at (603) 609-6964.

After reading through this information do you feel you will be Prepared, Comfortable and Confident? If not, what can we do to help you feel this way? Be sure to discuss these concerns with your provider during a prenatal visit.
