

I'm pregnant... Now what?

This is one of the most important days of your life! Women plan for their weddings and it is equally if not more important to plan for the day of your child's birth.

You will need to make decisions in the following areas:

Prenatal Care	Birth Experience	Postpartum Care
<p>How do I choose my care provider?</p> <p>What are my legal rights?</p> <p>What is the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative?</p> <p>What kind of tests should I have?</p> <p>What complementary care should I receive during pregnancy? Chiropractic?</p>	<p>What do you want in your birth experience?</p> <p>What do I want for my birth environment?</p> <p>What do I expect labor to be like? How will I manage pain?</p> <p>Will I hire a doula?</p> <p>What do I know about possible interventions? Do I want them?</p>	<p>What interventions do I want for my baby? Vaccinations? Circumcision?</p> <p>What do I want for the "Golden Hour" – the first hour after birth that is pivotal for bonding and recovering from labor?</p> <p>Do I plan to breastfeed?</p> <p>How will I cope with my changing emotions and the transition into motherhood?</p>

Use this five-step process to help you make decisions about your maternity care (adapted from choicesinchildbirth.org, 2013):

1. Educate Yourself—read books, articles, websites... join discussion groups... ask questions!
2. Listen to Your Body—feel your baby move, exercise, choose healthy foods, trust your intuition
3. Build a Personal Birth Philosophy—what do you believe about birth? What do you envision will happen on the most important day of your child's life?
4. Childbirth Education—take a childbirth education class to prepare yourself for what to expect. Learn how to advocate for yourself and your child.
5. Build a Birth Support Team—decide who you will surround yourself with on the big day. Choose people who know your birth philosophy and are prepared to support you!

What about tests and procedures?

Before consenting to a test or procedure, remember to.... BRAND

B– Ask, "What are the **benefits**?"

R– Ask, "What are the **risks**?"

A– Ask, "What are my **alternatives**?"

N– Ask, "What will happen if I do **nothing**?"

D– Make a **decision** that is right for your family.

What is a Doula?	
Birth Doula	Postpartum Doula
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands physiology of birth and emotional needs of the mother • Assists the woman in preparing for and carrying out her plans for birth • Stays with the woman throughout labor • Provides emotional support and physical comfort measures • Facilitates communication between the woman, her partner, and her care providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers education, companionship, and support during postpartum "fourth trimester" • Assists with newborn care, family adjustment, meal preparation, and light household tidying • Offers evidence-based information on infant feeding, emotional and physical recovery after birth, and infant soothing



Further Reading

Information about Pregnancy and Birth:

<http://www.choicesinchildbirth.org/>

<http://www.motherfriendly.org/>

<http://www.birthnetwork.org/>

Research your Care Provider:

<http://thebirthsurvey.org/>

Find a Doula:

<http://www.dona.org/>

<http://www.tolabor.com/>

<http://www.icea.org/>

Find a Childbirth Education Class:

<http://www.lamaze.org/>

<http://www.hypnobirthing.com/>

<http://www.bradleybirth.com/>

Willow Tree Family Center

A place for pregnancy, birth, and beyond.

Phone: 586-806-WTFC

www.willowtreefamily.com

