

Your Birth Plan at the Ruch Clinic

Congratulations on your pregnancy! This is an exciting time of major change for your entire family, and we are thrilled to be a part of your care. Believing that a safe and satisfying birth experience starts with thorough prenatal care, we want to partner with you regarding your health, prenatal screening and birth plan. Each physician at Ruch Clinic encourages you to participate in your own care so that you can make informed decisions about labor and delivery.

Attending childbirth classes may better prepare you for pregnancy, labor and delivery, nursing and caring for your new baby. The classes will help clarify your preferences and options during childbirth, such as family and friends you want to be present (maximum of 3 people during actual delivery), pain management, and ways to help labor progress, if needed (i.e., walking, rupture of membranes, pitocin). We offer a series of free childbirth classes about every two months which cover a range of labor, delivery and postpartum concerns. Please ask our receptionist about reserving a place when you begin your third trimester. There are also classes available at Baptist Women's Hospital and Methodist Germantown Hospital to help prepare you for motherhood. Birth is a natural part of life, and we will support you in natural childbirth if that is your goal. We will follow hospital policies about monitoring your safety and the safety of your baby during labor. We suggest keeping your plan flexible so that you have realistic expectations should labor not progress as expected.

LABOR TIPS:

- When you are close to full term (37+ weeks), pack your hospital bag with 1-2 days of essentials. Think about personal comfort items you may want to bring, like your own music to listen to during labor or your own pillow to have while in the hospital.
- If your water breaks, please call our office within the hour. After 4:00 p.m. during the week and on weekends, please proceed to the hospital.
- If labor begins with contractions (without your water breaking), wait until they are about 5 minutes apart for an hour before going to the hospital. During the week, please call our office first. Otherwise, after 4:00 p.m. and on weekends, go to Labor and Delivery for evaluation, and the nurse will notify the physician who is on call for Ruch Clinic. It is fine to remain at home during early labor when contractions are irregular and farther apart; some prefer to go to the hospital for pain medication and monitoring when active labor and regular contractions begin.
- If you have any bleeding, intolerable pain or question about the baby's movement, please call the office during regular office hours or go to the hospital. Should you have any regular or painful contractions before 37 weeks, call our office or on-call service at 901-682-0630.
- When you get to the hospital, go to Labor and Delivery admissions for evaluation. Usually, a nurse will assess you to determine if you are in active labor and will call the physician on duty for Ruch Clinic. She will monitor the contractions and how the baby is responding to labor with electronic fetal monitors. The labor and delivery nurses will check your cervix for dilation and will check the baby's position.

Your Birth Plan at the Ruch Clinic (Cont'd)

If you are in active labor and admitted to the hospital, your nurse will insert an IV port for easy access to intravenous fluids and medication, if needed. She will then take you to a delivery room where you will stay until you deliver the baby. You may walk and move about to help labor progress while the nurses monitor the baby intermittently. Many women are too uncomfortable to walk as active labor progresses during the period when the cervix is changing from 4-9 cm.

Once you are 10 cm and "complete," you will likely want to push in a sitting or recumbent position. If you chose an epidural, labor continues in the delivery bed, because you are not able to walk safely. If pregnancy complications develop, our physicians are skilled in performing any necessary procedures to prevent or minimize risk to you and your baby. Our priority remains the safety of the mother and baby. At the time of a vaginal birth, a partner is usually able to cut the cord immediately after delivery.

Whether you have a vaginal delivery or a cesarean section, we encourage you to nurse within the first 1-2 hours of birth, if possible. This is a special time for parents to bond with their babies. After delivery, a nurse will take you to the postpartum floor where you still stay until you are discharged from the hospital in a day or two. Babies typically stay with their moms unless you choose to send the baby to the nursery or the baby needs a special exam or procedure. Please talk to a nurse or lactation consultant while in the hospital with any questions or concerns about nursing.

Please ask questions, read the information we provide from the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG), and visit our website at www.ruchclinic.com. We hope this helps you prepare for the big day, and we look forward to sharing this exciting time with you!