

## Getting Ready to Give Birth

### *Helpful information*

*Our goal is to surround you and your family in a nurturing and safe environment for the birth of your baby. We look forward to providing the most sensitive and highest level of care during your stay for labor, birth, and early postpartum period. Our team is eager to help you welcome your new baby.*

*We encourage you to have family members with you during your prenatal visits, your birth, and while you are in the medical center.*

### **Labor & Delivery Tours**

For many families, it is helpful to see where you will give birth before you go into labor. Be sure to take a tour of Labor & Delivery with your partner and family during your 2nd trimester. Both daytime and evening tours are offered. To learn more and to register, visit [www.uwmedicine.org/services/obstetrics/tour](http://www.uwmedicine.org/services/obstetrics/tour).

### **When to Come to the Hospital**

Call your healthcare provider or Labor & Delivery before you come to the hospital. Most times, we will ask you to come to the hospital when:

- Contractions are:
  - 5 minutes apart for 1 hour if this is your first baby
  - 7 to 10 minutes apart if you have had a baby before
- Your water breaks – **even if you are not having contractions**. When your water breaks, you may feel wet, you may feel a “trickle” of water, or you may feel a gush of fluid.



*Call your healthcare provider or Labor & Delivery before you go to the hospital.*

## Plan Ahead

Plan ahead for how you will get yourself to the hospital when the time comes:

- Know how will you get to the hospital and who will take you.
- Know who will be with you at home in early labor.
- If you cannot get a ride to the hospital and you have a medical coupon:
  - A transportation broker, such as Hopelink or Paratransit, can help get you a ride to the hospital.
  - Call Labor & Delivery, and they will call the broker for you.

## How to Get to the Hospital

For maps and parking details for your hospital, please visit [www.uwmedicine.org/services/obstetrics/labor-and-delivery](http://www.uwmedicine.org/services/obstetrics/labor-and-delivery). Scroll to the bottom of the page. Click on “Getting to the Hospital.”

## Arriving at the Hospital

- When you arrive at Labor & Delivery, check in at the front desk. If you called ahead, our staff will be expecting you.
- We will help you get settled into one of our examination rooms. You will be in an exam room for about 1 hour. We will take your vital signs and confirm that you are in active labor.
- An *external fetal monitor* will be placed on your abdomen. A registered nurse will monitor you closely.
- You will also see a doctor who may not be your usual provider. This doctor will check your cervix.
- If labor has not actively started, we will either:
  - Send you home and tell you what to watch for, or
  - Send you out to walk around the hospital to help labor progress.
- If you are in active labor, you will be admitted to one of our birthing suites for the rest of your labor. At this point, you will meet your nurse. She will be your advocate during labor.
- Your nurse will talk with you about what to expect during your stay. Be sure to share your birth plan with your nurse. If



*Your labor partner is encouraged to stay with you throughout your hospital stay.*

you have other legal documents related to your health, such as an advance directive or living will, be sure to bring them with you to the hospital.

- If you have not already called your healthcare provider, we will call them when you arrive in Labor & Delivery.
- We encourage your labor partner to stay with you throughout your hospital stay. We will provide a daybed and linens.

We want you to be actively involved in your care. Please ask questions if you do not understand what is going on. We are happy to answer your questions.

### **Your Birthing Suite**

- All birthing suites in Labor & Delivery are private and have their own bathroom. Some baths have whirlpool tubs.
- There is a CD player in some of the rooms. Feel free to bring your music with you to relax during your labor. You may also bring your own portable music player if you want to use earphones.
- Some rooms have a small refrigerator, a TV, and a DVD player. A favorite movie might help pass the time during early labor.
- All rooms have wireless internet access. Bring your own laptop or other electronic device and power cord or charger.
- For your comfort, you may also want to bring personal items from home. These might include a pillow, blanket, robe, slippers, and photos.

### **Your Recovery Time**

You will be able to spend some special time holding your baby after the birth (unless you or the baby needs special care). During this recovery time, your nurse will check you often.

If you are planning to breastfeed, we will help you get started right after birth. Babies are often awake and alert then. Your nurse can help you.

### **Your Postpartum Stay**

Depending on the UW Medicine hospital you choose, you, your partner and your new baby may stay in your Labor & Delivery room until you are ready to go home, or you may move to a different room 1 to 2 hours after birth to finish your recovery.



*A pediatrician or your family medicine doctor will check your baby before you leave the hospital.*

Your baby will stay in your room with you while you are in the hospital. During your stay, your nurse will teach you how to care for and feed your baby.

Both you and your baby will see a healthcare provider to ensure that you both are well. A pediatrician or your family medicine doctor will check your baby before you leave the hospital. A different healthcare provider will check you before you leave.

UW Medicine is proud of our “baby friendly” hospitals. Our nurses are trained to help mothers start breastfeeding and offer support while you are getting started. If problems arise, one of our lactation consultants can meet with you and provide further help with breastfeeding. Your nurse can help you schedule an appointment with a lactation consultant in your room.

You will need lots of rest to heal and recover. Sleep when you can. Consider limiting phone calls and visitors. This will allow you to recover from giving birth and will give you more energy to take good care of yourself and your baby.

### **Visitors**

- You may have visitors at any time.
- Your other children are welcome to visit you and the baby, unless they are ill. They must come with an adult.
- Your partner and a friend or family member are welcome to stay with you and your baby. Some hospitals may be able to provide a daybed for their comfort.

### **How long will I be in the hospital?**

- **After a vaginal birth**, most mothers stay in the hospital for 1 day, if there are no problems. If your baby is born:
  - Late at night or in the early morning hours, you will not be sent home during the night or in the early morning
  - In the middle of the day, you may be ready to go home by the afternoon or evening of the next day
- **After a Cesarean birth**, most mothers stay in the hospital for 2 to 3 days.



*You will need a safe car seat to take your baby home from the hospital.*

## **Prescriptions**

You may be given prescriptions for medicine to take at home. The UW Medicine pharmacy can fill your prescriptions if you stop by the outpatient pharmacy before you leave. Or, you may have them filled at your local pharmacy.

Remember to bring your **health insurance card** and your **pharmacy or drug benefit card** with you. If you have a **medical coupon**, be sure to bring it with you. If a co-pay is required, you can pay it with cash, check, VISA, or MasterCard.

## **Birth Certificate**

You will receive a form to fill out that asks for your baby's name and information about you and the father. This information will be used for the birth certificate.

## **Leaving the Hospital**

### **Car Seat**

Be sure to have a safe car seat before your birth. You will be responsible for placing your baby safely in the car seat for your ride home from the hospital.

Some UW Medicine hospitals have car seats with a doll placed in them. Look at these car seats to see how to place your baby safely.

### **Getting Home**

Before coming to the hospital, please plan how you and your baby will get home when you leave the hospital. Let your nurse know if you need to arrange a ride through a transportation broker.

## **Early Days at Home**

Please call your healthcare provider if you have any questions about yourself, breastfeeding or bottle feeding, or caring for your baby.

You may receive a phone call at home from one of our nurses to see how you and your baby are doing. The nurse can also answer any questions you may have.

## **Clinic Visits for You and Your Baby**

If clinic visits are not already scheduled by the time you leave the hospital, you will need to schedule them for you and your baby.

**These clinic visits are very important!**

- It is helpful to have chosen a provider for your baby prior to birth. We can help you find a provider that will meet your needs if you haven't found one by the time of birth.
- Your baby needs to be checked by a healthcare provider 1 week or less after birth.
- If you do not have any health conditions that need special care, you will need to see your prenatal healthcare provider 6 weeks after you give birth.
- If you have any health conditions such as diabetes or high blood pressure, you will need to see your healthcare provider 2 weeks after you give birth.

## **Sexual Relations**

It is best for your health **not** to have sex before your clinic visit. But if you do, you will need to use a reliable form of birth control. If you have questions, talk with your healthcare provider. See the chapter “Your Family Planning” in this book.

### **Questions?**

Your questions are important. If you have questions about your birth plan, call your healthcare provider during office hours.

If you are in labor, follow your provider's instructions about calling your provider or your Labor & Delivery unit.