Birth Choices
Planning for your labor and birth

You may want to share your ideas and concerns regarding your birth and hospital stay with your provider. This informs us of what is most important to you. Remember to be flexible – you won’t be able to predict what your labor will be like. Bring your requests to a clinic visit so you can review them with your healthcare provider. The staff is responsible for the safety of you and your baby. We want to accommodate your requests to have a positive birth experience.

Your Baby’s Stay in the Hospital

Please let us know what is most important to you during labor and birth. The staff will try to provide what you ask for. Our first priority is the safe care of you and your baby. Also, consider how you think you may feel and what you may prefer if an unexpected event occurs.

Knowing what your options are for labor and birth helps you understand what may occur. It also helps you to make informed decisions about your care and the care of your baby. We want to partner with you in the care you receive.

General Information for Mother’s Time in the Medical Center

- Coping with labor pain: many mothers plan for an unmedicated labor and use relaxation and breathing techniques, frequent position changes, massage, focal point, music, tub or shower, hot/cold packs, and emptying of their bladder often. Others use medications, such as epidural anesthesia, as labor progresses.

- For information on photographs and videotaping see Birth and Labor Photos, Video and Audio Recordings, section 26.

- When a mother has a vaginal birth, she often has fetal monitoring to check the baby’s heart rate and well-being during labor, as well as an IV (intravenous fluids). Some mothers want to be in a special position, such as squatting while pushing, or may choose another position for the birth. Some may want to watch the birth in a mirror. Others want the lights in the room turned down, or have special music playing during the birth. Some request to have the baby placed onto her belly right after the birth, or request to have the baby dried off first.
(The staff will be watching to be sure the baby breathes well; this is our first priority.) Many request the support person cut the cord. Usually the mother and baby go home in 24 to 36 hours after a vaginal birth.

- **Cesarean birth:** When this occurs, the mother may have one support person with her during the surgery. Usually she and the baby will be in the hospital for three days after the birth.

- **Some families have special cultural or traditional practices that are important during and after the birth. The staff would like to know how to provide what is important to you.**

- **Meals:** If the mother has special dietary concerns, has a food allergy, needs a specific diet, such as diabetic, vegetarian, kosher, low fat, or specific ethnic requests, please let the staff know.

### General Information for Baby’s Time in the Medical Center

- **Normal newborn care consists of checks of baby’s temperature, heart rate and breathing for four hours, eye ointment in the first hour, and possible blood sugar checks. The weight and length are measured after the bath and cord care is done, and a vitamin K injection is given. Baby pictures are taken soon after the birth. Some mothers bring in a special outfit for the baby to wear for the photograph.**

- **Before your baby leaves the hospital, we will do a hearing screening. The purpose of the screening is to check your baby’s ability to hear and to help find those babies who need further hearing testing. Your baby will have one or two hearing tests. Both tests are very safe and will not hurt your baby. Please refer to the *Newborn Hearing Screening* brochure in this notebook.**

- **Some mothers plan to breastfeed only, others plan to formula feed only, and some choose a combination of breast and formula feeding. Most babies can breastfeed during the first hour after the birth. If this is a woman’s first experience breastfeeding or bottle-feeding, our nurses and lactation consultants will help.**
Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Labor and Delivery 206-598-4616

Postpartum 206-598-5600

Maternity and Infant Care Clinic 206-598-4070

- The baby’s bath is often done when the baby is between two and four hours old. A family member is invited to help, photograph, bathe the baby, or just watch.

- The mother may choose to have her baby boy circumcised. If she desires a circumcision for her baby boy, she will need to sign a consent form prior to this. If she chooses not to have him circumcised, the staff will show her proper care of the genital area. If she is unsure, she can ask for more information.

- It is important that your baby always rides in a car seat while traveling by car. We will show you how to use it safely before you go home. New car seats are available for purchase from UWMC.

After you go home, it is important that your baby gets well child check-ups with a pediatrician or family care provider. You may have a nurse come to your home to check you and your baby. Remember, your baby's immunizations are very important to keep your baby healthy. You will need to take your baby for a check-up at two weeks, two months, four months and as recommended by your baby's provider. Please refer to *Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn*, pages 145-168.