

THE Honest Midwife



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Birth~~X~~Plan

Birth Learning Plan

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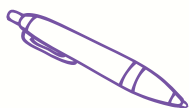


WHAT PEOPLE THINK A BIRTH PLAN IS!

When putting pen to paper in relation to your birth plan most people I speak to view this as a document that advises those looking after them what your preferences are for your labour, the birth of your baby and the care you receive postnatally. The hope in writing this plan is that it will serve as a guide to your midwife and doctor to understand your wishes and expectations. Sounds reasonable? BUT... is it a good idea?

A DOSE OF REALITY

If you think about the paragraph above do you really want your midwife or doctor to base their clinical judgment based on what you think you want. The reality is everyone's desires and wishes are very similar in relation to their labour and birth experience. Everyone wants as straightforward an experience as possible and ideally as natural as possible or they may be opting for an elective c-section. Either way it is highly unlikely that anyone's birth plan will state that they would like an induction of labour followed by an instrumental delivery.



A DOSE OF REALITY

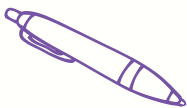
No-one really knows what route your labour and birth will take. If you had a 100 expectant parents in a room we all know that everyone will have a different experience and have different emotions about that experience.

When you think about the concept of a traditional “Birth Plan” the aim is to convey to those looking caring for you and your baby the things you would like to happen and the things you don’t want to happen.

However, as you know, just because you have written down what you want and don’t want doesn’t mean that is what will transpire. Sadly, because if it did, I would be a size 10 and have a swimming pool in my back garden!

Whilst I think this concept of a “Birth Plan” is flawed, I do think that there is a place for a document for you to work through in the weeks approaching the arrival of your baby. And, whilst the title isn’t as catchy I think it should be renamed...

MY BIRTH LEARNING PLAN



MY BIRTH LEARNING PLAN

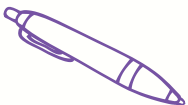
If you asked most people to sum up, in one sentence, what they would like their labour and birth experience to be like it would likely be along the lines of:

“We want things to be as straightforward as possible, and for us all to look back and feel that it was a positive experience.”

For those that actually have a very straightforward and uneventful labour and birth there is a higher probability that this is how they will feel. However, if things take unexpected twists and turns will they still feel the same? Possibly not!

MY BIRTH LEARNING PLAN is designed to guide you, and your partner, to ensure you have actually prepared for EVERYTHING! That way there won't be any unexpected twists or turns because you will be ready for every eventuality.

By using this guide you will understand all the things that you may actually need to navigate and as a result you will both be, ready for anything and will be less likely to feel traumatised if things aren't quite as straightforward as you had hoped.



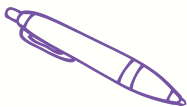
USING MY BIRTH LEARNING PLAN

In the pages ahead you will see all the things that I would recommend that you swat up on. The principal of your learning in the weeks ahead is that you are able to tick the following to any given topic:

- I understand what is being recommended
- I understand why X is being recommended
- I understand what the benefits of X are
- I understand what the risks of X are

The reality is, now is the right time to learn all these things. With the best will in the world, you and your partner are very unlikely to be able to absorb all of this information when you are in the thick of it. So, finding out as much as you can before hand will give you a good, solid foundation to enable you to feel that you are more empowered, informed and are actually giving informed consent or decline should a given situation arise.

Each section will have a tick box and also highlight which of The Honest Midwife classes cover this topic. Where possible I have also signposted to research that may help.



THE Honest Midwife

Perineal Massage

Covered in Natural Labour & Birth Class

What are the benefits of perineal massage

- ☐ Reduces the risk of tearing
- ☐ Reduces the need for episiotomy
- ☐ Increased elasticity in perineum
- ☐ Antenatal appointments plan
- ☐ Less pain during labour
- ☐ Faster Recovery
- ☐ Maternity benefits

Other techniques

- ☐ Warm compress applied to perineum
- ☐ Birthing position
- ☐ Download your free guide to perineal massage

Available research & Helpful Links

- ☐ [Cochrane Review - Perineal Massage](#)
- ☐ [BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth](#)
- ☐ [Perineal techniques during labour](#)
- ☐ [The Honest Midwife Perineal Massage Oil](#)
- ☐ [Download your FREE Guide to Perineal Massage](#)

Your Notes / Thoughts

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I/we ...

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Your Notes / Thoughts

This image shows a full page of primary-ruled notebook paper. It features ten sets of horizontal lines across the page. Each set consists of a solid top blue line, a dashed midline, and a solid bottom blue line, providing a guide for letter height and placement. The paper is otherwise blank, with no margins or additional markings.



I/we ...

- All of the above is covered in Natural Labour & Birth Class

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What to expect later on in labour

Calling the midwife or hospital

I/we ...

- understand why counting contractions is counter productive ☐
- the importance of managing tension ☐
- are clear on when to call the hospital ☐
- understand what will happen if we go into hospital ☐
- understand basic pain relief ☐
- understand why vaginal examination may be offered ☐
- understand all about water birth ☐

All of the above is covered in Natural Labour & Birth Class

Your Notes / Thoughts



What you need to understand about induction

Induction of Labour

I/we ...

- understand induction may be recommended ☐
- have considered what to do if I would prefer not to be induced ☐
- understand what the benefits and risks of induction are ☐
- understand the process of induction ☐
- have considered how we will spend our time throughout the process ☐
- are clear on what questions to ask our doctors so we are confident we are making an informed decision ☐

All of the above is covered in Induction of Labour & Instrumental Delivery Class

Useful Links

- [NICE Guidelines on Induction of Labour](#)
- [Interesting Listening - Obs Pod - Episode 35 Induction of Labour](#)
- [Dr Sara Wickham - further reading](#)

Your Notes / Thoughts

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Consultant Led Care

Care on the Labour Ward

I/we ...

- understand what continuous monitoring is (CTG) ☐
- fully understand the risks and benefits of epidural ☐
- are aware of the difference between a midwife led unit and the labour ward ☐
- understand what a forceps delivery is ☐
- understand what a suction delivery is ☐
- understand the risks / benefits of instrumental delivery ☐

All of the above is covered in [Induction of Labour & Instrumental Delivery Class](#)

Useful Links

- [RCOG Evidence Based Recommendations in relation to forceps delivery](#)
- [NICE Guidelines - care in labour](#)
- [Interesting Listening - Obs Pod - Episode 35 Induction of Labour](#)

Your Notes / Thoughts

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C-Section

Having a C-Section

I/we ...

- understand the different categories of caesarean section
- understand we can't be told "no" to having a c-section
- understand the reasons why it may be better for baby to be born via c-section
- are fully aware of what the procedure entails
- are prepared for what would happen on the day
- understand who will be in theatre and why
- know what happens in theatre
- know everything we need to know about recovery
- understand how a c-section may impact our baby

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All of the above is covered in [C-Section Workshop](#)

Useful Links

- [C-Section Video](#)
- [NICE GUIDELINES - Caesarean Birth](#)

Your Notes / Thoughts



Entering the 4th Trimester

Everything you need to know from the second your baby arrives

I/we ...

- understand the difference between active and physiological third stage
- understand delayed cord clamping
- understand what will happen if there is excessive bleeding
- understand perineal repair and recovery
- have learned what we need to know about Vitamin K
- know what will happen at our baby's first check
- understand jaundice and how it is managed
- are aware of current safe sleep guidelines and to be mindful of manufacturers marketing
- have an understanding on bathing our new baby
- have an understanding on changing baby's nappy
- know how to care for the cord
- know how to pick up and put down our baby

All of the above is covered in [Practical Parenting Class](#)

Your Notes / Thoughts
