

HOSPITAL TOUR

Taking a hospital tour is an important step in your birth preparation. It will acclimate you to the environment, and inform you of the hospital protocols and policies surrounding birth. These questions can give you a better idea of what to expect, but it is not necessary to ask ALL of them - choose the ones that are a priority for you. This is not an exhaustive list either - if you have questions about your care, ASK!

Logistics

- Where is the entrance? What if we arrive at night? Where should we park? Is there a fee?
- What paperwork will I need to bring? Can we preregister?
- If I believe I am in labor, where will I be initially examined? Is the triage area private? How long is the average time in triage?
- Are the rooms private or shared? Is there a fee for a private room? Are all of the rooms the same?
- How many patients are assigned to each nurse?
- Is this a teaching hospital? Can I request that students not attend my care?
- Is there food available outside of the hospital cafeteria hours?
- Does the hospital offer childbirth education or parenting classes?

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Labor & Birth

- What are the accommodations for my significant other? Can he/she sleep in the room?
- What are the policies regarding additional visitors? What about unwanted visitors?
- Will I be permitted to eat and drink during labor? Are there restrictions on what foods I can bring?
- What labor and birthing equipment do you provide? (birth balls, peanut balls, labor tubs, squat bars, wireless monitors, etc.)
- How comfortable is the hospital with minimal intervention births?
- What pain management options are available? (nitrous oxide, TENS units, IV medications, epidural, etc.)
- What is the average wait time for an epidural? Is there an anesthesiologist on site at all times?
- Is an IV saline drip standard on admittance? Can I decline? Request a Hep lock instead?
- Do you require fetal monitoring for low risk births? How often? What type of fetal monitoring? (external, internal, doppler/fetoscope) Are there wireless options?

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- If my water has broken, is there a time limit placed on my birth?
- Can I move around freely during labor? Are there restrictions on shower and tub use?
- Can I wear my own clothes during labor and birth?
- Are there restrictions on doulas? Are there scenarios my doula would not be permitted to be present for?
- Are there restrictions on photography/videography?
- Is the hospital affiliated with a public blood bank for cord blood donation?
- What do the immediate postpartum procedures for newborns include? Can exams be delayed to accommodate a “golden hour” of skin-to-skin?

Cesarean Birth

- What are the rates of vaginal birth vs. cesarean here?
- Can my partner stay with me? My doula?
- If I would like, can I view the birth via mirror? Could the drapes be lowered? Do you offer clear drapes?

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- Can I have my baby immediately for skin-to-skin in the OR? Failing that, can my partner do skin-to-skin in the OR?
- Can I take photos/video in the OR?

Postpartum

- Do you have a NICU? What level is it? Are there any scenarios that my baby may need to be transferred to another facility for care?
- Do all the postpartum rooms have showers/baths?
- Can my significant other stay overnight?
- Can my baby room-in? Can I send my baby to the nursery so I can rest?
- What breastfeeding support is available? Are there IBCLCs on staff? What hours? Are there hospital grade pumps available for use?
- Do you use pacifiers in the nursery? Can I decline? If supplemental formula is deemed necessary, will I be asked first?
- What are the visiting hours? Are there restrictions on young visitors? Number of visitors at one time?
- How long is the postpartum stay, generally?