

Childbirth Options-A Midwife's Perception

The birth of your baby is a very special time in your life. The Nurse-Midwives of VOB want to help you give birth to your baby joyfully, confidently and in the best of health. We also want to meet any special needs or wishes that you may have. As long as your pregnancy, labor and birth are normal, there are choices that you can make about the way in which your baby is born. This information is given to you help you learn the different childbirth options that may be presented to you.

LDR Rooms

Covenant Healthcare – Harrison has beautifully decorated rooms in which you can Labor, Deliver and Recover in privacy. You will then be moved to a private postpartum room where you will have plenty of peace and quite to get to know your baby. In certain high-risk situations it is necessary for you to give birth in the traditional delivery room.

Walking During Labor

Standing, walking and sitting helps make labor quicker. It may also be less painful for you. If there are no problems in your labor, we will encourage you to be in one of these upright positions.

Support Person

We want you to very carefully choose the people who you think will be most helpful to you in labor. We welcome caring, concerned support people. We ask that support people be focused on you, not the TV, not a meal and not each other. If you are interested in having your other children participate in the birth experience, we ask you to take them to sibling preparation class, have an adult supporter for each child in attendance and talk it over with us beforehand.

Fetal Monitoring

Your baby goes through labor too. The best way to tell that baby is doing well is to keep track of his/her heartbeat pattern. This is done with a machine called the fetal monitor. Two belts are placed around your abdomen. One keeps track of the baby's heartbeat and the other keeps track of contractions. If everything is going well in your labor we don't need to continuously monitor your baby, we just listen to the baby's heartbeat frequently. If we're concerned about the baby's heartbeat pattern we may want to place an internal monitor on the baby. This is a tiny wire that attaches to the baby's scalp and "reads" the heartbeat that way. We may also ask you to change positions and breathe oxygen through a mask.

I.V. Fluids

An I.V. (intravenous solution) can be started during labor for a variety of reason. Most commonly, it is started to deliver medicine, such as a pain reliever, or to give you fluids to avoid dehydration and exhaustion. If we feel that you may be at risk for bleeding too heavily we will start one in order to have a quick way to get life-saving medicine into you. If you are having a normal labor an I.V. is not considered a routine necessity.

Breaking the Bag of Water

The bag of water around the baby protects him/her from infections throughout the pregnancy. Sometimes the bag of water

will break on its own when you start labor, but if it doesn't we may wish to break it for you. This is done to speed up labor or to check on the baby. Breaking the bag of water is not painful.

Showering

A shower is worth at least a shot of pain medication. That surprises a lot of women. The warm water relaxes you and helps you cope with contractions. Each shower has a place to sit and your labor partner can hold the stream of water right where you hurt. We may have trouble coaxing you out! I.V.'s are easily covered and we listen to the baby's heartbeat periodically right there in the shower.

Pain Medicine

Emotional support, back rubs and breathing techniques (such as learned in childbirth classes) may be all that you need during your labor. If you need something more we can give medications such as Stadol or Demerol in a shot form or through an I.V. These don't make your pain disappear but they do take the edge off and help you to cope.

Anesthesia

You may have heard of "epidurals". This is a procedure in which an anesthesia provider places a tiny plastic tube into a space in your backbone. Through that tube the provider puts numbing medicine that bathes the nerves of your backbone. This gives very nice pain relief through most of labor. Sometimes we need to turn it off when you are in the pushing stage because it can make you so numb that you can't push well. If you think you might like this option please talk it over with us ahead of time.

Positions for Birth

There are many positions you can choose from when you give birth. Some women lie on their side, other prefer to sit or squat. Being on your hands and knees can relieve a lot of back pressure. We will help you get into whatever position you like best.

Episiotomy

An episiotomy is a cut at the bottom of the vagina to make the vaginal opening bigger. We believe that all women do not need an episiotomy. We will work with you to allow the vaginal opening to stretch to its fullest in order to avoid an episiotomy.

Rooming-in

You can have your baby with you during your whole hospital stay. We want you to do this. It is a great time to get to know your baby and learn baby care with the nurses close by to help you. We have fold-out beds for the support person and the baby has his/her own little crib.

Breastfeeding/Bottle-feeding

How you feed your baby is your choice. We'd like to encourage you to breastfeed. Of course, if you feel that bottle-feeding is best for you baby and yourself we will be supportive of you in that decision. If you decide that you'd like to breastfeed we will help you in many ways. Covenant-Harrison has breastfeeding specialists who can come to your room and help you get started. We midwives and all the nurses are also trained in helping women and babies get comfortable with it. We are all available to answer questions even after you go home. We can suggest several good pamphlets, books and support groups. If you decide to bottle-feed the nurses will teach you how to do it.

It is important for you to plan ahead when thinking about your labor and birth. Write down your special needs and wishes and bring this with you to talk over with us. We want you to have a safe and satisfying childbirth.

