

# The Center for Women, Children and Family Education

## Birth Preferences



*At The Valley Hospital, we are committed to providing family-centered maternity care that offers you and your birth partner a safe and satisfying birth experience. Each birth is a unique experience, and we welcome your input in making this the most positive and pleasurable event possible. Be sure to discuss your preferences with your healthcare provider before you go into labor so your options can be explored. We will make every effort to respect your goals, wishes, and desires for your labor and delivery, but please keep in mind that labor can be unpredictable. Our primary goal is a healthy outcome for you and your baby. We highly recommend attending childbirth education classes so that you become familiar with the labor process and all of its variations.*

**Please take advantage of our pre-registration program. It will minimize the amount of paperwork upon admission to Valley's Center for Childbirth. A pre-registration card is available from your healthcare provider.**

### **When you arrive at the Center for Childbirth's Labor and Delivery Unit:**

- We will care for you based on any special instructions we have received from your healthcare provider.
- We will review your medical history and obtain any necessary consents.
- A fetal monitor will be applied to obtain baseline information; monitoring will be continuous or intermittent depending on the baseline information and/or the orders of your healthcare provider.
- Vital signs are taken upon admission and every hour thereafter.
- If blood work is needed, it may be drawn at this time.
- We need to know if you are using a doula, which is a specially trained birth assistant.

*(This can be arranged through the Center for Women, Children and Family Education at 201-291-6151.)*

### **During labor, your environment influences your coping skills. You are encouraged to design your labor environment to accommodate your preferences for your optimal comfort. This may include, but is not limited to the following:**

- having your partner and one significant other present at all times,
- maintaining a calm and quiet environment,
- dimming the lights,
- watching television or playing the radio (available in all rooms), and
- bringing in your own tape/CD player so you may select your own music.



*You are strongly encouraged to get out of bed and walk during labor. This can speed the labor process and increase relaxation during contractions. Please keep this in mind:*

- You may remain out of bed as much as possible and may choose to walk, stand, or sit in the rocking chair, or shower.
- Birthing balls are available.
- Complete bed rest is necessary if you choose to have an epidural; however, you may change your position in bed for comfort.

*Maintaining adequate hydration is essential for you and your baby's well-being. Depending on the orders of your healthcare provider, your options may include:*

- ice chips and/or drinking clear fluids (water, Gatorade, juice, etc.);
- receiving fluids intravenously (You will need this if you are receiving an epidural, antibiotics, Pitocin or pain medication.); and
- the placement of a saline lock. (a port placed in the arm for quick access should an intravenous line become necessary)

**Much of the pain women experience during labor results from fear of the unknown. Childbirth education classes can alleviate fears about labor and delivery.**

**Steps you can take to alleviate the discomfort caused by strong contractions in childbirth include:**

- relaxation/breathing techniques/massage,
- motion/mobility/positioning/sitting on a birthing ball,
- taking a warm shower,
- IV medication or other alternatives as ordered by your healthcare provider and given by the nurse, and
- epidural anesthesia, ordered by your healthcare provider and administered by our 24-hour on-call anesthesiologist.

*When you are ready to push, your nurse will provide options and instructions based on your specific needs. You may use a variety of positions, including:*

a birthing stool, side-lying, squatting, or hands-knees.

## Finally, delivery is near!

### For a vaginal delivery:

- A mirror is available to view the birth of your baby.
- Your baby will be placed on your abdomen immediately after birth.
- In most instances, your partner may cut the umbilical cord.
- Footprints and identification bracelets are applied while your baby is on your abdomen or on the warming table.

### Delivery by Cesarean Section is always a possibility.

*We make every effort to ensure that this is a special delivery for you and your partner:*

- Spinal or epidural is the anesthesia of choice so you may be awake for the delivery.
- Your partner is welcome in the operating and recovery room.
- Should you desire, a mirror is available to view the birth.
- Your partner may trim the umbilical cord while your baby is on the warming table.
- Depending on your condition and/or the condition of your baby, your baby may stay with you and your partner while in the operating and recovery rooms.

## Immediately after delivery, your recovery period will include time to bond as a new family.

### *During this period:*

- Depending on your condition and the condition of your baby, your baby may stay with you.
- Breastfeeding may be initiated at this time.
- Your vital signs and assessment of the fundus and bleeding are done every 15 minutes.
- Visitors (4) may come in for a short visit during your recovery period (vaginal delivery only).
- Pictures are welcomed and encouraged.
- You and your baby may be transported together for the baby's weigh-in. Otherwise, your partner will accompany your baby to the nursery prior to your transfer to the Center for Childbirth's Mother/Baby Unit. Your partner may stay in the nursery to observe the weigh-in and the bath or join you in your postpartum room.



### Your hospital stay:

- After the initial bonding period, your baby will be assessed in the nursery for about 2 to 3 hours.
- Having the baby in the room with you is encouraged with options to accommodate your needs.
- An overview of your suggested daily itinerary is posted in each room.
- Baby care and breastfeeding classes are available.
- Lactation consultants are available.
- Medela breast pumps are available for sale or rental for your convenience.



## Questions I don't want to forget to ask my healthcare provider:

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**If you would like additional information, please contact:**  
The Center for Women, Children and Family Education  
223 North Van Dien Ave., Ridgewood, NJ 07450  
201-291-6151 or [www.valleyhealth.com/familyeducation](http://www.valleyhealth.com/familyeducation)