

Questions to ask a prospective obstetrician or midwife

- Do you practice in a group, and will I have a choice of practitioners? Do the others have similar philosophies on how to manage labor ?
- Do you plan to be away for a period of time around my due date?
- Do you deliver at home? In a particular hospital? In a birth center?
- Do you view birth as a natural physiological process, and what is your policy on routine Intervention?
- Do you practice natural childbirth? How many of your mothers deliver without medication?
- Do you use a particular method of natural childbirth, for example Bradley, Lamaze or a combination?
- Do you or does someone you recommend teach childbirth education classes? What do they cover?
- Do you recommend amniocentesis or ultrasound? Under what conditions?
- Do you remain with a mother continuously during labor, or do you have a nurse or labor coach do so?
- Who can be present during labor and delivery-father, friends, siblings, birth coach?
- Do you allow visitors not approved by the mother? Will you allow a mother to restrict observers other than her family or friends?
- Do you allow a mother to deliver in her own clothes?
- Do you require any prep before birth, such as a shave or an enema?
- What is your policy about fetal monitoring? Do you use fetoscope, Doptone, or a continuous external or internal monitor?
- Do you routinely use an IV?
- What is the labor room like? Do you allow or encourage a mother not to walk around, move and change position in labor? Eat or drink in labor?
- Do you have time limits for the different stages of labor?
- How many of your patients receive pitocin to simulate labor?
- Do you rupture the membranes routinely?
- If labor begins with the spontaneous rupture of membranes, do you set a time limit for when the baby must be born? If so, how long is it?
- How long do you allow a mother to be overdue before intervening? Then what do you do?
- What is your cesarean rate? Your group's rate? The hospital's rate?
- If a mother requires medication for pain, what type do you recommend?
- If you work at a hospital, can a mother deliver in the labor room provided if it is an uncomplicated delivery?
- Do you allow the lights to be dim during an uncomplicated delivery if the mother requests it?

- Do you allow the mother to view the birth in a mirror if she cannot see it in the position she is in? Can her husband/friend videotape the birth?
- What type of birth table or bed do you use? What positions do you allow a mother to deliver in? Do you have a squatting bar available?
- Do you encourage pushing in the second stage of labor? What positions do you allow a mother to push in?
- How many patients do you deliver with forceps or a vacuum extractor?
- Do you use massage oil, and /or heat on the perineum to avoid an episiotomy? How often do you use an episiotomy?
- Do you allow the mother to touch the baby as it's being delivered?
- Do you allow the placenta to deliver naturally?
- When do you cut the umbilical cord?
- Do you encourage bonding? Is the mother allowed to hold and nurse the baby? immediately? For how long?
- What medical procedures are routinely performed on the baby?
- If the baby is healthy, can procedures like weighing be delayed?
- If there is no history of gonorrhoea, can the eye drops be refused?
- How soon will you discharge a mother after delivery?
- Does the hospital have complete rooming-in? If not, when must the baby be in the nursery?
- What are the visiting hours for the father?
- Can siblings visit?
- What is your policy on circumcision?
- How do you handle common complications of labor, such as unusual presentations or failure? or labor to progress?
- How do you handle breech deliveries? Do you try to turn the baby manually? Are you experienced at delivering breech babies vaginally? Do you routinely do a cesarean for breeches?
- Do you do vaginal births after cesarean (VBACs)?
- Who can be present at a cesarean? Father or friend?
- What anesthesia do you use for a cesarean?
- Do you insist that the mother have preoperative medication that will make her drowsy during the cesarean?
- Do you use a bikini skin incision and transverse uterine incision whenever possible for a Cesarean?
- Can the mother view the cesarean delivery? Can she have the screen down? Can she move her arms about freely?
- Do you encourage cesarean bonding? Is the baby placed directly on the mother or given to the father?
- Can the baby and father stay with the mother in the recovery room?
- Is there full rooming-in for cesarean mothers?
- What are the visiting hours for cesarean fathers? Can siblings visit?