



BIRTH PREP CONVERSATIONS

BY ADORING DOULAS



HELLO! ✨

My name is Krystil, founder of Adoring Doulas and Innerbloom Doula Institute. As both a birthworker and a mother, I am dedicated to helping women critically assess their pregnancy and birth options with clarity and confidence. Birth is not just an experience—it's a pivotal life event that deserves informed decision-making, unwavering support, and a deep understanding of physiological and medical realities. My goal is to provide you with the knowledge and insight needed to approach this journey with both intuition and intellect, ensuring that your choices align with your values and vision.

adoringdoulas.com
adoringdoulas@gmail.com



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

You're likely here because you desire an autonomous, empowering, and generally positive birth experience.

It all begins with the individuals you choose to have in your corner on your baby's birth day.

Use the questions in this guide to make sure your provider aligns with your birth vision and that your support team comprehends what it means to stand by you throughout this journey.



Introduction

Birth is one of the most transformative moments in a woman's life, shaping not only her entry into motherhood, but also her confidence in her body and decisions. The right support—both from care providers and birth partners—can make all the difference in how she experiences this journey.

A truly empowering birth begins with open, thoughtful conversations. When a mother and her care team—her provider, partner, and support people—are in alignment, she can step into her birth space feeling confident, heard, and supported. This guide is designed to help you navigate those discussions, ensuring that everyone involved understands and respects your birth vision.

Your partner plays a vital role not just as emotional support, but as an active participant in your birth experience. When they are prepared and confident, they become a steady source of reassurance and advocacy. This guide will help them step into that role with perspective and purpose.

You deserve a birth experience that leaves you feeling respected, empowered, and at peace with your choices. Let's make sure your entire birth team is working together to bring that vision to life.



WHY YOU NEED TO INTERVIEW YOUR PROVIDER..

Birth is a team sport. And every person on your birth team plays a significant part in your big day. In fact, your provider in particular is the single most important decision you will make as you navigate your pregnancy and birth. They consult and influence every decision you make for you and your baby.

Birth shouldn't be treated like a medical event. It is, however, a profound, life-altering experience that shapes a mother's confidence, identity, and trust in her own body. Yet, too often, women find themselves navigating a system that prioritizes routine protocols over individualized care, leaving them feeling unheard, uncertain, and pressured into choices that don't align with their birth vision.

As a birthworker and educator, I've witnessed firsthand how transformative it is when a woman steps into her birth space feeling informed, prepared, and in control. The difference between a birth that feels empowering and one that feels disempowering often comes down to a woman's ability to ask the right questions, advocate for herself, and surround herself with a support system that truly honors her choices.



YOU ARE THE CAPTAIN



The process of birth is akin to navigating uncharted waters, where you, the mother, are the captain of the vessel. Your birth team, consisting of your care provider, partner, doula, and others, are your crew—each serving a distinct yet equally important role in ensuring the success of your journey. Every member of this team should be attuned to your needs, in agreeance with your vision, and equipped to respond to the dynamic nature of the birth process.



CARE PROVIDER

Your care provider (whether a doctor, midwife, or other medical professional) acts as the navigator, offering their medical expertise and guiding you through the complexities of birth. While they are responsible for the health and safety of both you and your baby, their role is not to command or set ultimatums. Instead, they should provide options, advice, and information that allows you, as the captain, to make well-informed decisions.

Responsibilities:

- Present evidence-based options, outlining the risks, benefits, alternatives and potential outcomes
- Prioritize safety while supporting your autonomy and preferences
- Offer expert recommendations while always respecting your own decision-making authority
- Foster a collaborative relationship to ensure your birth vision is prioritized



PRENATALS

This is where it all starts. Every prenatal appointment is an opportunity to interview your provider and assess their responses to ensure they are the right consultant to collaborate with on your big day.

HOW TO PREP

1. Know your birth vision
2. Research common birth practices
3. Craft 5 open ended questions
4. Prioritize your concerns
5. Assess alignment in your providers beliefs

Quick Tips

Before you get into the questions that you need to ask your care provider, consider the following:



1 Never make assumptions about your providers philosophy

Do not assume that a female provider is more understanding or supportive than a male provider and do not assume that all Midwives support physiological birth. Do not assume that your provider has your best interest, and do not assume that because your sister loved that OBGYN that you will love them too.

2 Interview several providers from different practices.

You can ask your friends and family for personal recommendations for care providers, but make sure to also ask them what they liked and didn't like about the provider. Your sister might have LOVED that her OB scheduled an induction at 38 weeks, and that might be something you're trying to avoid at all costs...

3 Ask open ended questions.

You want your provider to answer the questions based on their own beliefs, and not have them answer questions in a way that agrees with yours. We want to avoid the all too common bait-and-switch.

4 You can always change providers!

If you are ever doubting your provider's ability to support you, then you should absolutely look for a new provider. You need to feel comfortable putting yourself first, and if that means firing your provider (even late in pregnancy)... do it!

General Questions

- What is the likelihood that you will attend my birth?
- How do you support the natural hormones that help my baby and me through labor, birth, breastfeeding, and bonding?
- What would you say if I gained 50lbs in pregnancy?
- What medical treatments or monitoring do you regularly use during labor and birth?
- How many ultrasounds do you recommend?
- How do you handle long labor?
- What is your policy regarding the routine use of interventions?
- How do you manage the birth of the placenta?
- Will you honor my right to informed consent?
- Can I refuse cervical checks?
- How would you handle my care if I went past 41 weeks? 42 weeks?
- Do you think the kind of birth I'm hoping for is possible?
- How do you feel about doulas? Do you recommend I hire a doula?

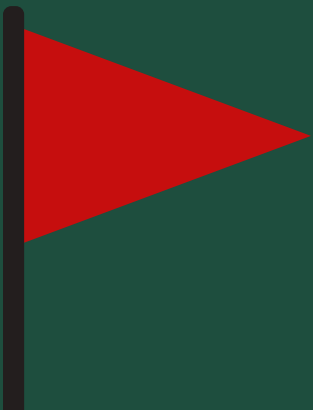
HOSPITAL SPECIFIC

- Is there a 24-hour anesthesiologist available?
- What is the RN to patient ratio?
- Can you tell me what the triage process is like?
- When would you recommend inducing labor?
- When would you recommend augmenting labor?
- What are the reasons you would perform a cesarean?
- How often do you perform cesareans?
- What do you think makes your cesarean rate so high, when the WHO recommends keeping that number below 10%?
- How will you help me avoid a cesarean?
- What percentage of women have an epidural?
- What are your recommendations for labor positions, and pushing positions?
- How many people can I have in the room with me?
- Do I have the right to decline any interventions? What is the process like to sign AMA (against medical advice)?
- What do you recommend for non-medical pain-coping relief?
- How often do you attend non-medicated births?
- Can I keep my baby with me at all times?
- What procedures are routine for newborn care?
- What type of support do you offer to breastfeeding moms?
- How soon can I leave the hospital after birth?
- What if I want to leave sooner than that?

RED FLAGS

10 indicators that your provider
isn't the best fit for you

1. They make you feel bad
2. They rush your appointment
3. They don't share all the information
4. They are condescending
5. They seem disinterested
6. They use scare tactics
7. They don't share benefits AND risks
8. They don't share alternatives
9. Their answers are vague or confusing
10. They say things like..
 - a. I don't allow..
 - b. You can't..
 - c. It's against our policy..
 - d. You have to..



What else?

ALERT!

Consider changing providers ASAP!

If you don't do this, your baby could die...

Fear-based coercion rather than evidence-based discussion.

Why would you want to do that?

Dismissive of personal preferences.

We'll see how things go...

Often a vague way to avoid committing to honoring a birth plan.

That won't be necessary...

Especially when declining routine interventions.

That's not how we do things here...

Ignores the fact that the mother is the decision-maker.

That's just how it's always been done...

Tradition isn't a reason to ignore informed choice.

I'm the doctor here, remember?

Undermines patient education.

It's too late to change your mind now..

Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

REMEMBER

Not only can you fire your care provider at any point during your pregnancy, but I URGE you to fire them if you aren't receiving quality care.

Switching providers sounds like it's a huge ordeal, but I promise you the weight that will be lifted once you find a good provider is well worth any short-term stress. Think of it this way, you're signing up for some short-term stress in pregnancy in order to find a deeper sense of calm leading up to your birth.

CHANGING PROVIDERS

01

Stay composed. While it may be easier said than done, maintaining a level head is an excellent strategy to ensure you remain in control while searching for a new provider.

02

Send an email to your old provider canceling future appointments. Tell them that you are switching your care and would like them to email you your chart. (Email is a great way to avoid a confrontation that might put you in a negative emotional space.)

03

When trying to find a new provider, stay positive – as in, don't bash your old provider. Keep the conversation focused on why this new provider is such a great fit.

04

Go into your appointment with your new provider knowing what you want and don't settle for less. It's amazing how other people can sense your level of confidence, and when you have self-respect and set the bar high, others typically follow suit.

05

Remember that a hospital legally cannot turn away a laboring woman. So, if you're really late in the game, don't ever fear that you'll be left alone to labor without options.



partner

Your birth partner is your first mate—someone who stands by you, helping to navigate the emotional and physical aspects of labor. They provide constant support, ensuring that your wishes are communicated clearly and consistently, advocating for you when necessary, and reinforcing your vision throughout the process.

Responsibilities:

- Serve as your advocate, ensuring your birth preferences are communicated and respected
- Stay informed, offering emotional and physical support when needed
- Maintain confidence and calm, assisting you in decision-making and staying aligned with your birth plan
- Offer continuous reassurance and emotional support to stabilize the experience

Ensuring support, not influence

Your partner's role in labor is to support, protect, and reinforce your choices—not to direct or influence them.

Clear conversations ahead of time will ensure they show up in a way that respects your autonomy while still being present and engaged.

define their role clearly

01

Your partner isn't there to make decisions for you but to support the decisions you make. They should act as a steady presence, an advocate when needed, and a source of encouragement—not a decision-maker.

Tip: Be direct. Example: "I need you to support my choices, even if you'd do things differently."

presence > problem solving

02

Partners often want to "fix" discomfort, but birth isn't a problem—it's a process. Their role is to hold space, not offer solutions that may undermine your confidence.

Effective support looks like:

- Encouragement over suggestions ("You're doing amazing" vs. "Are you sure you don't want medication?")
- Physical presence—counterpressure, hand-holding, or simply staying close
- Advocating by reinforcing your birth plan when needed

words matter

03

Even well-intended comments can introduce doubt during labor. Phrases like "You don't have to suffer" can feel like pressure rather than support. Set clear expectations on language.

Tip: Give them phrases that do help.

Example: Instead of "You can change your mind," they can say, "You're strong, and I believe in you."

education

04

If your partner has doubts about your choices, address them before labor. Encourage them to learn with you—whether through books, classes, or birth stories—so they understand your reasoning.

Tip: Ask them to voice concerns now, not in the delivery room.

Example: "What worries you most about my birth plan? Let's talk through it."

advocacy

05

In labor, you may not be in a position to push back against unwanted interventions. Your partner should be ready to reinforce your wishes with care providers.

Tip: Have a simple plan.

Example: If a provider suggests an intervention, your partner can ask, "Can we have a moment to discuss this privately?"

THEIR PERSPECTIVE

- What do you know about childbirth?
- What's your view on doctors?
- How do you feel about hospitals?
- How would you feel if I wanted a homebirth?
- What are your thoughts on doctors and medical interventions?
- What comes to mind when you think about labor and birth?
- What fears or concerns do you have about the birth process?
- What experiences (personal or from others) have shaped your views on birth?
- What do you see as your role during labor?
- How involved do you want to be in supporting me physically and emotionally?
- Are you comfortable being hands-on (massages, counterpressure, etc.), or do you prefer supporting me in other ways?
- How do you feel about seeing me in pain or discomfort?
- What would make you feel more prepared to support me?

COMMUNICATION

- What kind of encouragement do you think I'll need most during labor?
- How do you usually handle high-stress or emotional situations?
- How can I help you feel more confident in supporting me?
- Are there certain words or phrases that would help you stay calm and grounded?
- If I get overwhelmed or discouraged, how do you plan to help me refocus?
- How comfortable are you with reinforcing my birth plan?
- If a doctor or nurse suggests an intervention, how will you handle it?
- Are you prepared to ask for more time or information before we make medical decisions?
- How would you respond if I make a choice that differs from what you'd personally prefer?

Quick Tips

If your partner is hesitant about any of your preferences, open communication, education, and shared preparation can help bridge the gap. Here are practical steps to ensure they understand, respect, and actively support your choices:



1 Have an honest, judgement free conversation

- Ask about their fears, expectations, and concerns.
- Share your birth vision and why it matters to you.
- Emphasize teamwork: “I need you to trust my choices.”

2 Educate together

- Take a birth class that aligns with your plans.
- Watch birth videos that reflect your vision.
- Read, listen, or attend prenatal visits together.

3 Clarify their role in birth

- Support, not direct, your experience.
- Offer encouragement, hands-on comfort, or advocacy.
- Avoid undermining comments (“Are you sure?”).

4 Align on medical decisions and advocacy

- Review your birth plan and discuss scenarios.
- Practice advocacy phrases:
 - “Can we have a moment to discuss?”
 - “What are the risks, benefits, and alternatives?”

HIRE THE DOULA



It never hurts to pull out all the stops to get your dream birth. You and your baby DESERVE it. You will think about your birth experience every day for the rest of your life.. and there are no do-overs!

Doulas have been proven to help mom's reduce rates of surgical birth & epidurals, reduce time in labor, positively impact birth outcomes for mom & baby and reduce the chance of postpartum depression/anxiety.

A doula's #1 priority is YOU. That means you have a dedicated advocate who is also an expert at supporting you physically, mentally and emotionally in labor.

If you need help finding a doula, please feel free to reach out to me directly.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Being on the same page as your care team and partner as it pertains to your preferences is integral to you having the positive experience you want.

Having these conversations might seem intimidating, nerve wracking.. maybe even a little bit scary! But flexing this muscle and using your voice is great practice for the big day.

If you are seeking more education on birth preparation, check out our prerecorded classes that are jam packed with information to help you walk away from your birth feeling empowered and straight up bad ass.

PREP CLASSES