



PREPARING FOR YOUR IDEAL BIRTH

8 SIMPLE
STEPS TO
PREPARE FOR
THE BIRTH OF
YOUR DREAMS

FARGO BIRTH

PREPARING FOR YOUR IDEAL BIRTH

”
AS MOMS OURSELVES,
WE KNOW HOW
IMPORTANT THIS
JOURNEY IS
FOR YOU.

Here at Fargo Birth, we are a team comprised of doulas and birth photographers who are passionate about helping moms to relive their journey to motherhood. We have been supporting and photographing growing families since 2016. We understand the labor process from an experiential perspective, as well as from a scientific, biological standpoint - and none of it makes us uncomfortable.

We respect and honor your birth space and strive to be all that you need from us. If hired for doula services, we will support you through the labor and delivery process. If hired for birth photography services, we will capture your birth as a fly-on-the-wall that you will barely even notice. We know how to capture the emotion perfectly in every moment so you can relive your birth from the outside looking in.

Portraits by Amber also offers maternity, newborn, milestone and family sessions that capture your entire journey to motherhood, from pregnancy through birth to baby and beyond.

1

TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN YOUR EXPERIENCE

The days of passively moving through pregnancy and birth, blindly following the advice and suggestions of our well-meaning family, friends and care providers are over - thank goodness. By downloading this guide, you're already taking an active role in your experience. Good job!

Taking an active role in your experience means that you are taking accountability for how, where and with whom you give birth. It is recognizing that while birth may be unpredictable in ways, you can still set yourself up for the best experience possible by creating a supportive environment, educating yourself, and making informed choices for your pregnancy and delivery.



WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE THINGS YOU WANT TO EXPERIENCE (OR AVOID) WITH THIS PREGNANCY?

1

2

3

"Our intention creates our reality"
-Wayne Dyer

FARGO BIRTH

2

EDUCATE YOURSELF

A big part of taking an active role is educating yourself on pregnancy, birth, hospital policies and evidence-based care. DO NOT rely on your friends, family and care providers to do this for you. You're probably already following some Facebook groups and mommy blogs, and maybe even have a book on your nightstand. But I challenge you to take it up a notch and find a local, comprehensive childbirth class that will give you the knowledge to make informed choices about your birth experience. This may include choosing a care provider that's right for you, learning about the stages of labor , practicing different comfort measures, and understanding your rights as a patient and how to advocate for those rights.

Our favorite resource and childbirth class for expecting moms is by Evidence Based Birth.



MY FAVORITE BIRTH EDUCATION RESOURCES

Evidence Based Birth - <https://doulajoyce.com/childbirth-class>

EBB Podcast - <https://evidencebasedbirth.com/evidence-based-birth-podcast/>

Beautiful Beginnings 7 week childbirth class - <https://birthwithmandi.com>

Hypnobabies - <https://www.hypnobabies.com/>

Embryoga-Intuitive Birth (hosted by Elise Tacker in Fargo) - <https://www.embryoga.com>

"Knowledge is power"
-Francis Bacon

FARGO BIRTH

3

VISUALIZE YOUR PERFECT BIRTH

This might sound a bit woo-woo at first, but hear us out. Visualization is a tool that has been used for years with professional athletes, and science is really starting to collect some data on the effectiveness of this technique. The Hypnobabies program uses visualization as a core principle, encouraging you to get into a hypnotic/meditative state and mentally "see" your birth as you want it to play out. When you consistently visualize your birth exactly as you want it to happen, you might be surprised by how close you come when the day arrives.

We have heard countless stories of moms who have used this technique and were able to not only experience less pain during labor, but were able to "plan" their baby's birthdays with surprising detail.

If you haven't purchased the Hypnobabies audio, no worries! You can use pretty much any meditation/hypnosis music on YouTube or Insight Timer.

Here's a sample meditation that is used during pregnancy:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RONRwr8oA



HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR PERFECT BIRTH?

"Visualization is daydreaming with a purpose"
-Bo Bennett

FARGO BIRTH

4

MAKE SELF CARE A PRIORITY

Self-care is a topic that has been beaten to death lately. And I know you're probably thinking - DUH! of course I have to take care of myself while pregnant.

But we think it's worth mentioning in this guide because, while we know it's important, we often still don't make time for it. Self-care is important all the time, but when we're pregnant it's especially crucial. In nurturing yourself, you're also nurturing your baby. Studies now suggest that our emotions and physical state during pregnancy can and do affect our growing baby.

From a more selfish (maybe?) point of view, staying healthy during pregnancy will make labor and delivery MUCH easier. Physical fitness makes labor easier for us to get through without intervention, and learning to relax during pregnancy is a skill that can be transferred to riding the waves of labor when the time comes.

Think of childbirth like a marathon. You wouldn't wake up one day after spending 9 months watching TV, eating Oreos and complaining about the weather to run 26.2 miles. At least, not very easily (or without lots of help - aka intervention). So, Momma - TAKE CARE OF YO SELF.



**WHAT 3 THINGS WILL YOU DO DAILY (OR WEEKLY)
TO MAKE SELF CARE A PRIORITY?**

"Self-care is how you take your power back"
-Lalah Delia

5

WRITE A BIRTH PLAN

A well written birth plan is concise and easy for your care providers to understand, but detailed enough to make sure all of your goals for labor, delivery and immediately after delivery are communicated. The exercise itself of writing your birth plan will help you to learn more about your options in the process and decide on your preferences ahead of time, so you're not trying to communicate those during the emotional journey through childbirth. Print copies for anyone who will attend your birth and discuss it with them well before your due date. Bring a few extra copies for your hospital/birth center staff once you check in. I love this visual birth plan template because it's simple and easy to understand, yet comprehensive.



CONSIDER THESE POINTS WHEN CREATING YOUR BIRTH PLAN

- Do you want to be offered pain medication? Or do you plan to have an unmedicated birth?
- Who will be present with you?
- Do you want to be free to eat, drink and move around during labor?
- Do you want labor augmentation (ie: pitocin, membrane rupture, etc.)
- Do you want to choose your position for birth?
- Do you want dad to be able to "catch"?
- Do you want to labor and/or deliver in the water?
- Think about the birth environment - do you want lights dimmed? Music?
- Do you want cervical exams or no?
- Do you want continuous, intermittent or no fetal monitoring?
- What equipment do you want to use (ie: birth ball, rebozo, birth stool, etc.)
- If a C-Section becomes necessary, who do you want in the OR with you? Do you want delayed cord clamping?
- Who will cut the cord?
- Do you want to collect cord blood?
- Do you want to save the placenta for encapsulation?
- Do you want immediate skin to skin?
- Do you want to breastfeed soon after birth? Do you want baby to have formula or absolutely not?
- Delayed or no bath for baby?
- Delayed or no vaccinations?
- Do you want the eye ointment and/or vitamin K for baby?
- If you have a boy, do you want to circumcise?
- Do you want baby to go to the nursery?
- Do you want baby to be given a pacifier?

"A dream without a plan is just a wish"

-Katherine Paterson

6

FIND A BIRTH DOULA

Doula literally means "women's servant". A birth doula is a non-medical support person who is trained in supporting women, partners and families through the birth process. They can provide emotional, education and physical support both before, during and after birth. Many studies have shown that using a birth doula leads to a higher likelihood of vaginal delivery, less interventions (including pain medication and vacuum/forceps assisted births), fewer cesareans and greater birth experience satisfaction.

We are lucky to have many qualified and passionate doulas in the Fargo/Moorhead area. Not only do we have our own amazing doulas at Fargo Birth but <https://fargodoula.com> is another great resource to find doula support in our area. Most (if not all) of the doulas on the website offer a free consultation to meet and greet and discuss any questions you have about using a doula for your birth. They also work collaboratively, so if you meet with a doula who thinks your goals might align better with a different doula, they are happy to refer you to make sure you're matched with the *perfect* doula for your needs!



"Birth is the epicenter of women's power"
-Ani DiFranco

FARGO BIRTH

7

HIRE A BIRTH PHOTOGRAPHER

We might be a bit biased on this point, but hear us out.

You are putting in a lot of time and energy into creating an amazing birth experience - don't trust your memory to hold all the details. This is a BIG event worth capturing professionally. Like your wedding day, it will come and go so quickly that it will be a giant blur when it's all over. Consider these points when deciding if hiring a birth photographer is right for you:



YOU SHOULD HIRE A BIRTH PHOTOGRAPHER IF:

- You want a series of pictures that tell the story of your baby's birthday, instead of just a few snapshots.
- You want your partner to enjoy the moment with you, instead of him worrying about remembering to take pictures.
- You want to remember the details - what your birth space looked like, what the weather was like, what you did for comfort during labor, who was there to support you, etc.
- You want quality, artistic images to look back on that truly capture the emotions of each moment.



"We are making photographs to understand what our lives mean to us"

-Ralph Hattersley

FARGO BIRTH

8

REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT

Having a baby is a life-changing event. Even though it's usually full of joy and excitement, it still is turning your world upside down and hurling you into uncharted territory. This is true even if you already have kids, because there will inevitably be adjustments to make.

Support during pregnancy is important, but we really want to stress the importance of reaching out for support after baby arrives, too. Our culture puts a lot of attention on the new baby, as we should, but often the mom gets forgotten. Your body will have just done an amazing thing by bringing your baby into the world! You need time to rest, recover and enjoy your new little squish without jumping right back in to life as it was.



TIPS FOR BUILDING YOUR SUPPORT CUSHION

- Do your best to gather support for the first few weeks and months after baby is born BEFORE baby is born. You could even do a sign-up sheet for meals, cleaning and shopping for friends and family who have offered to help out.
- Outsource where you can (hello grocery delivery).
- Know the signs of postpartum depression and postpartum anxiety. Make sure your partner knows these signs as well so he can recognize if and when you may need some extra support from your doctor.
- Consider hiring a postpartum doula. Your birth doula may even be willing to add this service on for you, and if she can't, she may know someone who can.

"Accepting help is its own kind of strength"

-Kiera Cass

8 STEPS TO PREPARE FOR THE BIRTH OF YOUR DREAMS



Congratulations! By downloading this guide, you're already taking the first step in preparing to have an amazing birth experience! Yes, birth can be unpredictable, but you have a lot more control over your experience than you might have once thought. Follow the steps below and ask questions to learn more.

1

TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN YOUR EXPERIENCE

The days of passively moving through pregnancy and birth are over - thank goodness. By downloading this guide, you're already taking an active role in your experience. Good job!

2

EDUCATE YOURSELF

Commit to taking at least one birth education class (outside of the hospital-offered class) to learn more about birth, comfort measures in labor, and your rights as a patient.

3

VISUALIZE YOUR PERFECT BIRTH

As woo-woo as it sounds, it really works. Every night as you go to sleep, picture in your head your birth exactly as you would like it to go.

4

SELF CARE

Exercise, good nutrition, and stress management are always important - but especially during pregnancy. A healthy body can manage the physical and mental stress of labor much easier.

5

WRITE A BIRTH PLAN

Having a birth plan helps you to decide what YOU really want and will also serve as a "manual" of your wishes for your birth team to follow.

6

FIND A BIRTH DOULA

Doulas are professionals trained in the birth process. They can provide emotional, physical, and educational support. Having a doula is associated with fewer interventions and a higher rate of birth satisfaction.

7

HIRE A BIRTH PHOTOGRAPHER

This is one of the most important days of your life that you will spend 9 months (or more) anticipating. Hire a professional birth photographer to document it so you and your partner can relax and enjoy the moment.

8

REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT

This journey will be full of ups and downs. Surround yourself with positive people there to support you through it. You may even consider hiring a postpartum doula to help in the first few days/weeks after baby arrives.