

# Beliefs About Birth – Mom’s Questions

This is intended as a starting point for discussion between expectant moms and their support people. It offers the chance to explore our underlying expectations about labor. Then, when issues come up during labor, each person has a better sense of their partners’ basic values and needs.

1) My beliefs about the importance/impact of the birth experience (choose one, or write your own)

- The birth experience is extremely important, with lifelong effects on mom, baby, and the whole family. Everything should be done to make it a positive experience.
- The birth experience is a special time for the family, but it’s OK if things don’t go as you hoped. Moms and babies are resilient, and will bounce back just fine.
- The birth experience is just a means to an end... just one day in your life. Babies don’t remember it, moms just need to get through it and move on to parenting.
- Other:

2) How painful do you think labor is? Rate on a scale of **1** = Painless to **10** = Unbearable \_\_\_\_\_

3) What is my preference for pain medication? Rate on a scale of 1 – 10, with **1** = I want no drugs no matter what, **10** = I want anesthesia as soon as labor begins. \_\_\_\_\_

4) Advocacy: During labor, when I’m focusing on contractions, my support person may be the one who talks to the medical staff about our birth plan and our choices. How do I want him to act?

- I don’t feel like we have to ask many questions: If my doctor says something is necessary, I just want my partner to agree for me.
- I want my partner to feel comfortable asking questions and finding out information for me, so we have a clear understanding of the recommendations.
- It’s important to me to have as much control and choice as possible. I want my support person to be assertive with staff, and help me to avoid any unnecessary interventions.
- Other:

5) Support: Think of times when you’ve been sick, or in pain, or scared, or stressed out. Of the things listed below, circle the things that would be most helpful to you / feel most supportive:

Partner cheering me on: You’re doing a great job!	Partner saying: I’m so sorry this is so hard for you.	Partner saying: It’s hard now, but it’s going to be OK.
Just being left alone.	Having someone to just be quiet and be there with me	Being held and rocked.
Distractions	Some distractions, some focus on what’s going on.	Focusing on what’s going on
Humor and laughter	Reassurance and calming	Being taken seriously
Having someone to get for me anything I need	Having someone there to help me do things	Having someone to give me new ideas for what to try
Firm Massage	Gentle stroking	Just having a hand touching me, without moving.

6) Faith in my body’s ability to give birth: Which one of these is closest to how I feel?

- I feel a lot of anxiety about my body’s ability to give birth, and my ability to cope with the whole labor process.
- I’m nervous, because it’s a whole new thing for me, but I think that labor and birth is going to work out OK.
- I believe that women’s bodies were meant to give birth, and I have total confidence in my body’s ability to give birth.
- Other:

# Beliefs About Birth – Support Person

1) My beliefs about the importance/impact of the birth experience (choose one, or write your own)

- The birth experience is extremely important, with lifelong effects on mom, baby, and the whole family. Everything should be done to make it a positive experience.
- The birth experience is a special time for the family, but it's OK if things don't go as you hoped. Moms and babies are resilient, and will bounce back just fine.
- The birth experience is just a means to an end... just one day in your life. Babies don't remember it, moms just need to get through it and move on to parenting.
- Other:

2) How painful do you think labor is? Rate on a scale of **1** = Painless to **10** = Unbearable \_\_\_\_\_

3) What do I wish mom's preference for pain medication is? Rate on a scale of 1 – 10, with **1** = I really don't want her to have any pain medications no matter how hard labor is to **10** = I want her to have pain medication right away... I hate the idea of her being in pain. \_\_\_\_\_

4) Advocacy: During labor, mom may need to focus on her contractions, and may rely on her support person to interact with the medical staff and help her get the information to make the best decisions. Which of these styles best describes your way of relating to medical professionals?

- I tend to feel intimidated around doctors. It is hard to ask questions, tell my preferences, or advocate for my wishes. I just do what they tell me to do.
- I feel pretty comfortable around health care professionals. I enjoy my interactions, I trust and rely on their opinion, and appreciate their care.
- I choose to be assertive with health professionals. I do my own research, ask questions, get some second opinions. Having some control and choice empowers me.
- Other:

5) Support: Imagine mom was sick, or in pain, or scared, or stressed out. Of the things listed below, circle the things that you would feel most comfortable doing to help her feel better.

Cheering her on: You're doing a great job!	Saying: I'm so sorry this is so hard for you.	Saying: It's hard now, but it's going to be OK.
Leaving her alone to give her the space to cope w/ it	Just sitting quietly with her	Holding her and rocking her
Distract: give her something else to think about	Some distractions, some focus on what's going on.	Help her to focus on what's going on
Joking, making her laugh	Reassuring and calming her	Taking her feelings seriously
Getting anything she needs	Helping her do things	Giving her new ideas.
Firm Massage	Gentle stroking	Just touching her, not moving.

6) Faith in her ability to give birth: Which one of these is closest to how I feel?

- I feel a lot of anxiety about her body's ability to give birth, and her ability to cope with the whole labor process.
- I'm nervous, because it's a whole new thing for both of us, but I think that labor and birth is going to work out OK.
- I believe that women's bodies were meant to give birth, and I have total confidence in her body's ability to give birth.
- Other:

Discuss this with your partner! See where you line up, and where you're different, and talk about how to work through the differences.