



" This is My Body, I Live Here. "

- Nia Hodge, Public Health Advocate

Fresno's BLACK Birth Plan

"They want to know who your spouse is, what they are like. They ask: " - What do you do for extracurricular activities?" They ask you about your sexual life. They ask you about everything, and for you to have so much information on me, but not to help me. It doesn't feel good. It feels like you're interrogating me. But for what reason? Are you going to use this information against me? Are you using it to help me?"

- Mother in Fresno who had an emergency C-section

Your patient – Black Birthing Persons:

We are mothers, women, and birthing persons with unique needs and experiences. We are valuable human beings, and our needs matter.

This birth plan is based on a compilation of experiences, lessons learned, and desires voiced by Black mothers and women in Fresno.

This plan is about standards and treating Black birthing persons with the dignity and respect they deserve, but have not traditionally received.

While providing care please be mindful of:

- I might be showing signs and symptoms of high-risk pregnancy and preterm labor.
- I am not just another case.
- Not all birthing experiences will be the same. A previously used technique may not work for me.
- Disrespectful and suboptimal care can traumatize me and affect me throughout the life course.
- I want to be heard and respected, especially when I say that something is not right with my body.
- "Angry Black Woman" is a negative stereotype. Sometimes it is hard for Black women to advocate for themselves, as it is not taken well when we do. Please consider that if I elevate my voice may be because I fear that otherwise I will not be heard.
- I need your help to prevent complications, including preterm birth.
- It means a lot to me to be treated with good care, dignity, and respect.
- My body belongs to me, it is not a medical teaching tool, nor is it a domain of trial and errors.
- I might choose to decorate my body and express who I am in a way that may be new to you. Do not allow this to interfere with the quality of care I receive.

My delivery is planned as:

- Vaginal delivery. No C-SECTION, unless emergency situation.

I would like to have multiple supports present before AND/OR during labor:

- Educate and explain pregnancy standard procedures.
- Share information about the benefits of delaying cutting the umbilical cord and if cord banking is right for us.
- Allow me to shower with a support person to ensure my safety.
- Inform us if something is not going well.
- Allow my support persons to look after me and be my voice before and during labor, so I can feel comfortable.

During labor and postpartum, I would like:

- Equipment in labor room to properly work.
- Communication between staff, and communication with us.
- As few interruptions as possible when sleeping.
- As few vaginal exams as possible.
- Assistance with non-medical pain relief based on my preference (use of birthing ball, back massager, and showers when desired).
- Introduce me to other providers on your team.
- To eat and drink as approved by our doctor as soon as possible.
- If I or someone from my support team has a concern, check on my well-being.



I would like to spend the first stage of labor:

- Freedom of movement - no bed-restriction during labor, unless there is a medical reason.
- Continuous fetal movement monitoring.
- Anyone who enters my room should introduce themselves and explain their role.
- If you are a resident, please ask my permission to have my birth be a part of your learning journey.

I am not interested in:

- Unneeded wired monitors.
- Any internal monitors except what is medically necessary.
- Insertion of an IV if it is not medically necessary.
- Receiving medical interventions and medical pain relief without explanation on the harms it may cause to me or my baby.
- Wearing a hospital gown. After labor, allow me to use my own gown if I choose to.

Birth pushing:

- Follow the urge to push.
- Coached pushing - that way I do not tear from pushing too early.
- Allow me to push in a position that is safe and comfortable to me.
- I would like to not be told how to breathe.

Moment of birth:

- Delay wiping the baby off after delivery.
- I would like skin to skin immediately after birth.
- Check my baby's vitals right after delivery.

Feeding:

- I prefer my baby to be breastfed. I would like immediate help in postpartum from a lactation counselor. If my baby cannot latch on immediately, support me with a breastpump and show me how to use it.
- Support me to keep breastfeeding even if the baby is in NICU.
- If needed, order human breastmilk from the milk bank for my baby.
- Check up on feeding concerns when brought to attention.

Postpartum unit:

- Adequate accommodation for support persons so they can be comfortable.
- Be mindful of my time and needs. Discuss with me the discharge plans, individualize my discharge timing, and follow up on any changes as soon as possible.

The birth plan was developed under the leadership of **Amya Brooks**. This birth plan was informed by her birth experience and the real experiences of other mothers in the community. Reviewed by the BWPC Community Advisory Council January 2022.

Copyright Information

© 2021 BLACK Wellness & Prosperity Center. All rights reserved. The material in this guidance may be copied and disseminated in any media in its original format, without modification, for informational, educational, and non-commercial purposes only. Any modification or use of the materials in any derivative work is prohibited without prior written permission from BLACK Wellness & Prosperity Center or an authorized representative.

My Birth Plan

Hospital name:

While providing care **please be mindful that:**

My delivery **is planned as:**

I would like to have **multiple supports present before AND/OR during labor:**

During labor and postpartum, **I would like:**

I would like to spend the **first stage of labor:**

I am not **interested in:**

Birth **pushing:**

Moment of birth:

Feeding:

Postpartum unit:
