



Preparing for your birthing facility stay

Did you know?

A doula is someone who provides continuous support during labor, delivery, and after delivery. Many communities have doula services at free or reduced costs. Ask about local resources or refer to p. 22.

Your labor and delivery

Pain relief

Talk to your healthcare provider about your options for pain relief during labor. Knowing the benefits and concerns for each option ahead of time will help your decisions be well-informed during your labor and delivery.

There are many ways to help cope with the pain of labor that do not involve medication.

To reduce the discomforts of early labor, try:

- Deep breathing, focusing on pleasant things
- Movement and walking
- Massage and relaxation
- Heating pads or cold compresses
- Continuous support from someone you trust

Many find it easier to cope with early labor at home.

Follow the guidance of your provider about when to come into the birthing facility.





Skin-to-skin contact

Keep your baby warm and secure

Your baby should be placed skin-to-skin with you right at the time of birth.

Some birthing facilities practice skin-to-skin after C-sections in the operating room.



The cream (vernix) on newborns' skin is good for them - it protects their skin from infection and helps keep them warm. It is completely normal to place the baby skin-to-skin with the cream visible.

Most babies are ready to breastfeed within the first hour.

Continue to hold your baby skin-to-skin frequently during the first weeks. It's great for partners to be skin-to-skin, too.

Make sure you can always see your baby's face to look for good color and normal breathing.

Benefits of skin-to-skin

Keeps your baby warm

Easier to bond and breastfeed

Helps calm your baby

Easier adjustment to life outside the womb for your baby

Keeps your baby's blood sugar levels high

Helps steady baby's breathing