### The Ultimate

### BIRTH PREP WORKBOOK



"Birth is not only about making babies. It's about making mothers; strong, competent, capable mothers who trust themselves and believe in their inner strength."

Barbara Katz Rothman

Essential Checklists

Effective Pain Relieving Tips

Illuminating Journal Prompts

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### CONTENTS

07 Letter From Bailey 08 The Books

### PREGNANCY

10 Questions to Ask a Prospective Care Provider

14 Questions to Ask a Prospective

Birth Doula

18 Relaxation Techniques

19 Guided Meditation Downloads

21 How To: Emotional Freedom
Technique (EMT)

24 Fear Release Exercise

27 Your Favorite Relaxation

29 De-stressor Breathing

30 Labor Breathing

31 Descent Breathing

32 Additional Breathing Exercises

33 Prenatal Bonding Exercises

36 Letter to Baby

38 Your Ideal Birth Story



### CONTENTS

### PREGNANCY

42 Guide to Essential Baby Preparation

46 Creating a Serene Nursery

50 Guide to Colors for the Nursery

53 Nesting Checklist

56 Essential Items for Baby Registry

59 List of Ideal Birth Supporters

60 List of Ideal Postpartum Supporters

61 Selecting the Ideal Birth

Environment

64 Hospital Tour Questions

68 Journal Prompts

### CHILDBIRTH

'/'/ Birth Affirmations

81 Vaginal Birth Preferences Template

86 Cesarean Birth Preferences Template

90 Top 10 Pain Relieving Tips foi

Childbirth

94 Pain Relieving Pressure Points

99 Finding Your Favorite Birth Positions























### CONTENTS

### CHILDBIRTH

105 Hospital Packing Checklist

109 Homebirth Checklist

111 Birth Space Checklist

114 Important Person Contact List

115 Onset of Labor Checklist

116 Active Labor Checklist

117 Journal Prompts

### MOTHERHOOD

125 Baby's Stats

127 Postpartum Recovery Kit Checklist

131 Tips For Bonding With Baby

135 Self-Care Wish List

137 Postpartum Self-Care Ideas

139 Your Birth Story

143 Birth Announcement Recipients

144 Breastmilk Storage Guide

146 Journal Prompts

152 Additional Resources





### LETTER FROM BAILEY

Hello beautiful woman,

I'm honored that you're here. I'm honored that you trust me to support you in the process of preparing for your birth.

I'm a chronic list maker + tips creator so this workbook was a joy to create. It's kind of like the love child of my books "Feng Shui Mommy: Creating Balance and Harmony for Blissful Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Motherhood" and "Asking For a Pregnant Friend: 101 Answers to Questions Women Are Too Ashamed or Scared to Ask About Pregnancy, Childbirth and Early Motherhood" (coming Spring 2021!)

My hope is that this workbook soothes your mind, helping you organize all the to-dos and discover answers to many of your most pressing questions.

I hope that it sends you into the wild journey of motherhood feeling grounded and equipped to handle all the unknowns.

I hope that it inspires you to also step back from all the to-dos and reflect on the big picture of the transformation you're moving through.

Throughout it all, remember that you are a strong, empowered + perfect-just-as-you-are woman.

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Birth Affirmation:
I give unconditional optimism to my birth
– even if it doesn't turn out the way I expect, it will be filled with love.

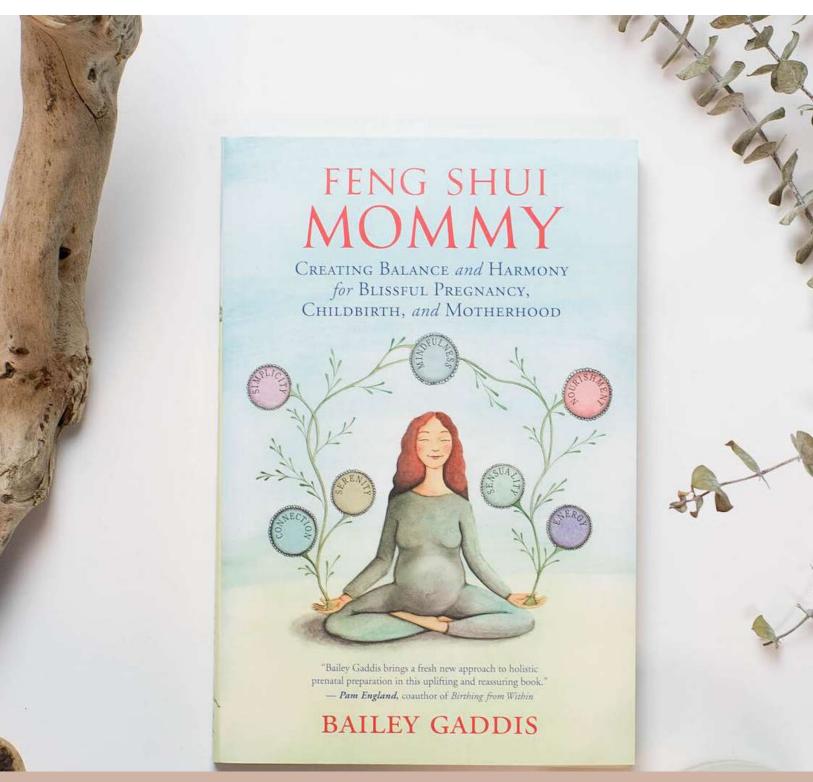
"There is a secret in our culture, and it's not that birth is painful. It's that women are strong."

**Laura Stavoe Harm** 

### THE IDEAL COMPANION TO THIS WORKBOOK







# Pregnancy



### Questions to Ask a Prospective Care Provider

- I'm interested in [insert your birth philosophy here]. (For example, HypnoBirthing or Lamaze.) Are you familiar with this philosophy? What's your general birth philosophy?
- How do you typically offer support during labor and delivery? How has Covid-19 changed your practices?
- How many births have you attended? How many have resulted in csection?
- How likely is it that you'll be the one attending my birth? If you're not available, who will be at my birth? Will I be able to meet your alternate/s before I go into labor?
- How easy is it to reach you after-hours, or in an emergency?
- What are your beliefs on inducing labor?
- Would you be supportive of me providing a list of birth preferences?





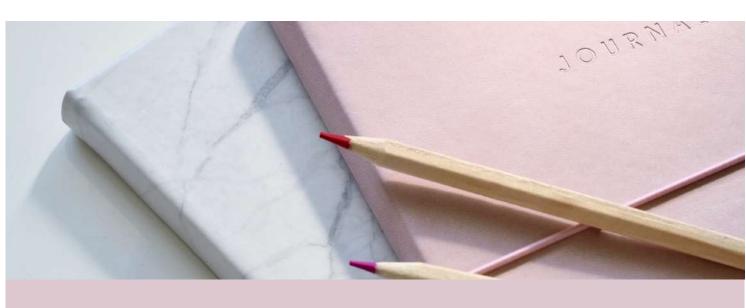
- (If you're planning on a hospital birth.) Is there certain protocol you recommend during birth? What about the hospital where I'll be delivering?
- What prenatal tests do you recommend?
- How do you typically support special circumstances like gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, or a breech baby?
- What are your thoughts on patient autonomy? (This essentially means that your care provider won't try to unduly influence your decisions, with the exception of providing requested information.)
- How present are you during birth?
- What are your views on unmedicated birth?
- What are the circumstances that would cause you to recommend a csection?
- How do you typically guide women as they're pushing (or breathing) the baby out?
- Do you support delayed cord clamping?



# Questions to Ask Yourself After the Interview

- Do I trust this care provider? Do I feel comfortable talking with them and asking questions?
- Do they share my birth philosophy? If not, do I feel like they'll support my wishes without judgement?
- Will I be able to access this care provider as often as I would like?
- Is this a person I feel will enhance my pregnancy and birth experience?





## QUESTIONS TO ASK A PROSPECTIVE BIRTH DOULA

When starting the search for a birth doula, ask for referrals from local moms. Then, meet with a few before hiring, as you want to ensure you both think the relationship would be a good fit. Keep in mind that some doulas specialize in certain areas, such as massage or hypnotherapy, and occasionally have higher rates because of this additional training. Finally, choose the doula you and your birth companion feel great about!

To make sure you have comprehensive interviews, consider asking...

- Why did you become a doula?
- What are some of the best experiences you've had as a doula? The most challenging?
- Has Covid-19 changed how you provide certain aspects of your services?
- Will you take on other clients who are due around my due time? If so, what will happen if we go into labor at the same time?
- Do you provide continuous emotional support? (For example, will they help you reduce fears and anxieties, and bolster your confidence and a sense of empowerment? And how will they do that?)
- How many prenatal visits do you provide? Do you offer a postpartum follow-up?

- What is your fee? When is it due? What's included in your fee?
- Are you familiar with my birth philosophy? If not, are you willing to learn about it and support it?
- Do you hire a back-up doula? If so, will I be able to meet them, and are their potential services built-in to your cost?
- How will you support my partner?
- Will you be on-call for two weeks before and after my due date?
- Do you provide as-needed phone and text support during my pregnancy?
- Do you provide in-person support as soon as I request it when I go into labor?
- Will you stay for the entirety of my labor, regardless of how long it takes?
- How would you provide a buffer in "harsher" birthing environments?
- How will you support bonding between my partner and I during labor and delivery?
- Do you provide pregnancy and birthing massage?
- Are you familiar with aromatherapy or acupressure?



- - Do you provide visualization prompts or guided meditation?
  - What type of breathing techniques will you suggest?
  - What other relaxation techniques do you facilitate?
  - How will you help me advocate for my birthing preferences?
  - Can you set up a birth tub?
  - Do you provide assistance with various birthing positions?
  - Will you take photos and videos?
  - Can you offer breastfeeding support?
  - Do you offer infant care training?
  - Do you offer food preparation? Or are you willing to pick up food?
  - Do you support postpartum clean up?



Jse this space to list additic record notes from your inte	ns you'd like to	ask, and





### LINKS TO GUIDED MEDITATION DOWNLOADS

- 1 RELEASING SHAME DURING PREGNANCY yourserenelife.wordpress.com /releasing-shame/
- 2 ENJOYING YOUR RAINBOW BABY PREGNANCY yourserenelife.wordpress.com/rainbow-baby/
- RELEASING DISAPPOINTMENT ABOUT YOUR BABY'S GENDER yourserenelife.wordpress.com /babys-gender/
- JOURNEY THROUGH A GENTLE C-SECTION yourserenelife.wordpress.com/gentle-csection/
- 5 ENHANCING YOUR CONFIDENCE FOR CHILDBIRTH yourserenelife.wordpress.com/enhancing-birth-confidence/
- FEELING CALM AS AN EPIDURAL IS PLACED yourserenelife.wordpress.com/epidural-meditation/
- MAKING PEACE WITH THE UNKNOWNS OF CHILDBIRTH yourserenelife.wordpress.com/unknowns-of-childbirth/
- PREPARING FOR AN ORGASMIC BIRTH yourserenelife.wordpress.com /orgasmic-birth/











- 9 RELEASING THE FEAR OF DYING DURING CHILDBIRTH yourserenelife.wordpress.com/fear-of-dying/
- JOURNEY THROUGH A
  PEACEFUL VBAC
  yourserenelife.wordpress.com
  /vbac/
- 11 TURNING A BREECH BABY yourserenelife.wordpress.com /breech-baby/
- RELEASING THE FEAR OF TEARING DURING CHILDBIRTH yourserenelife.wordpress.com/fear-of-tearing/
- 13 DISCOVERING YOUR IDEAL BIRTH ENVIRONMENT yourserenelife.wordpress.com /ideal-birth-space/
- AWAKEN COURAGE TO ADVOCATE FOR YOUR BIRTHING RIGHTS

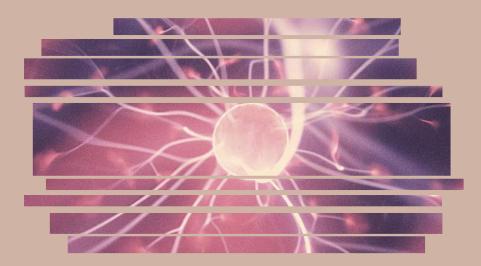
  yourserenelife.wordpress.com
  /birthing-rights/
- RECLAIMING SERENITY ON YOUR PATH TO MOTHERHOOD gum.co/ymoYR
- BIRTH AFFIRMATIONS gum.co/prkhN





### **How To: Emotional Freedom Technique**

EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) is a simple technique that helps reset fearful, chaotic energy running through the body. I recommend using this technique before any activity that triggers negative emotions or physical responses - like an ultrasound or vaginal exam.



1 2 3

#### NAME THE ISSUE

Before you begin resetting your energy around a particular issue, you need to decide what issue you would like to work with. For example, the first time I tapped I focused on my panic-attack inducing fear of ultrasounds – it dissolved my fear that there wouldn't be a heartbeat. Once you clear the energy for one issue, you can move on to others. For this tutorial we'll use "fear of vaginal

#### **DISTRESS LEVEL**

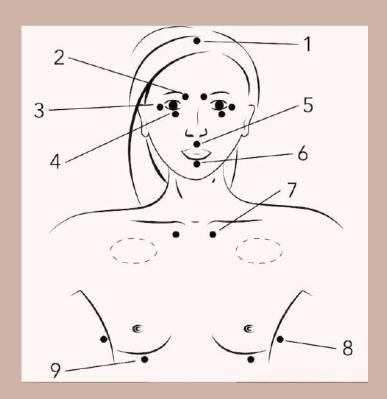
We first need to determine how much distress this issue is causing. Close your eyes and focus on your fear of vaginal bleeding. On a scale of zero to ten - one being no pain or anxiety around this issue, and ten being extreme pain or anxiety around it - decide what your current level of

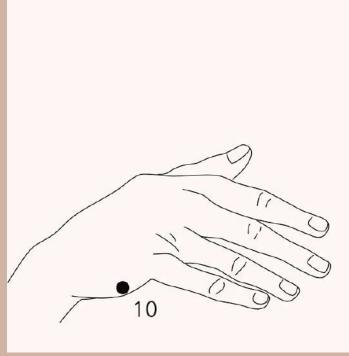
#### **TENDER SPOTS**

system into the issue you're working on. To do, locate two tender spots about two or three inches below your collarbone on each side of your chest. (See dashed ovals on diagram on next page.) Rub those spots in a circular motion while saying the following affirmation three times out loud (or in your head). "Although I have a (insert issue here), I still profoundly and wholly love and honor myself." So, "Although I have a fear of vaginal bleeding, I still profoundly and wholly love and honor myself."



Your fear of vaginal bleeding (or childbirth, or spiders, or The Real Housewives, or fill in the blank) is now ripe for the re-setting. Following the numbers on the diagram below, tap each point (moving from one to ten), as you repeat your affirmation with each number. Use your pointer and middle finger on each hand, so you can cover each side of your body with each round of counting.





Repeat the sequence a few times, then close your eyes for a moment.

#### Re-assessment

As you sit with yourself, reassess your level of distress over the issue you're working with. So you might imagine yourself wiping, and seeing blood. You see and feel yourself there, noticing what comes up. You may still experience hints of fear or anxiety, but likely not at the same level as before you tapped.

Now, go through a few more rounds of the tapping sequence, this time using a revised affirmation like, "Although I still have *some* fear of vaginal bleeding, it's subsiding, and I still profoundly and wholly love and honor myself." We're still acknowledging the fear, but honoring the reduction of its intensity. Continue the cycle of tapping, affirmations, and reassessment until your intensity level is down to a zero (or whatever number you feel good with).



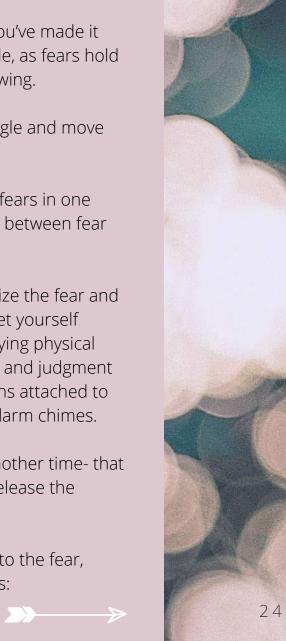




### FEAR RELEASE EXERCISE

Suppressing fear-induced-emotions infuses life into them, often causing a manifestation of depression or unpleasant physical symptoms. Here is a plan to liberate the emotions surrounding your fears so they can have their moment then go bother someone else.

- 1. Meditate on the various elements of your life (e.g., friends, family, career, body, home, incoming childbirth, etc.) and any fears that may be latched on to them.
- 2. Write down the fears on the following note page. If you've made it this far, tremendous progress has already been made, as fears hold the greatest power when they exist without you knowing.
- 3. Choose the fear that's causing you the greatest struggle and move through the following steps.
  - \*There's no need to move through your entire list of fears in one day, be gentle with yourself, creating time for rest in between fear release sessions.
  - a. Set a timer for 90-seconds, close your eyes, visualize the fear and allow the emotions attached to it to be expressed. Let yourself notice and experience the emotions, and accompanying physical sensations moving through you let go of resistance and judgment towards the fear. Hold the intention that the emotions attached to the fear will be flushed out of you by the time your alarm chimes.
  - \*The fear you're working with may be triggered at another time- that is normal, just give yourself the 90-seconds to re-release the attached emotions.
  - b. Now that you've released the emotions attached to the fear, examine it objectively and decide whether the fear is:



- Completely outside your control, and can be fully released by doing the previous 90-second-release work anytime it comes up. (There is no benefit in stewing over a potential outcome you have no control over.)
- An issue you need to educate yourself on. (Knowledge gained pushes away uncertainty, and invites in confidence.) For example, I was so fearful of testing positive for Group B Strep (an infection caused by a common bacterium often found in pregnancy). I educated myself on what it actually was (not as scary as I thought), and what my options would be if I tested positive. When I *did* test positive, I felt calm and prepared.
- A fear you need to talk through with another individual. (Honest communication can foster peace, harmony and connection.) For example, if you're fearful of how your romantic relationship will shift after birth, share these concerns with your partner.
- 4. Do the work mama. Just do it. When you release the emotions that hold up your fears, and release the fear of them poking their heads up again (which they may do), you live from a space of love and trust, versus suffering and doubt.
- 5. Do It Daily. Every morning before you get out of bed, clear any negativity that may have made itself known as you slept, by closing your eyes and envisioning any and all fears, doubts or stressors being pulled from your mind, body and spirit and collecting in a bubble floating in front of you.

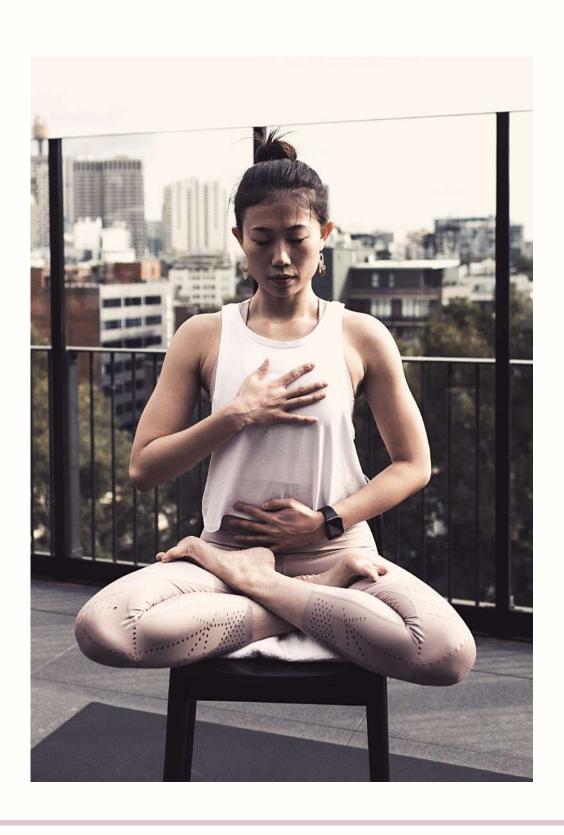
Then, deeply inhale, imagining the bubble being blown away from you and picked up by the wind. Imagine it being pulled so far out on the horizon it becomes a miniscule dot that pops and dissolves everything the bubble carried. Now smile, open your eyes and claim your fresh day.





<b>List of Your Favorite Relaxation Exercises</b> Give this list to your birth supporters so they know how to best help you.

### BREATHING TECHNIQUES



### DE-STRESSOR BREATHING TECHNIQUE

Fill yourself with love + comfort, release fear + tension.

This is the breath work you'll utilize to soothe common stressors, and in between surges during birth. When you've practiced this enough, you may notice yourself always breathing to this pattern (and people commenting on how incessantly calm you are.)

#### Do this:

- Inhale to a slow count of 8
- Hold for 3
- Release to a slow count of 8
- Continue until you've settled into the soothing, misty core of your mind



### LABOR BREATHING

Fill yourself with softness + surrender, release resistance + distraction.

Use this breath through each labor surge you'll likely need to do a few during each surge.
This breath creates extra room and oxygen for
your baby (reducing your chances for
interventions), and prevents tension between
your outer and inner uterine muscles.

#### Do this:

- Slowly inhale to a quick count of 1 to (as high as you can count).
- Slowly exhale to the same count.
- The numbers don't matter as much as the intention behind the breath. If you can only reach 10 or 11 when you first start practicing, that's fine. Take pride as your numbers grow each time you practice.

Use the following visualizations with each Labor Breathe:

- Pretend a rose is unfolding with each inhalation, and closing with each exhalation.
- Imagine the oxygen being sent to your and uterus is a bright light infused with and pain-relief.
- Envision your body turning into warm pliable goo with each exhalation.



### D E S C E N T B R E A T H I N G

Fill yourself with power + expansion, release fear + fatigue.

After you've moved through transition, feel a strong fullness in your rectum and pelvis, and you're fully dilated (at 10 cm) you may not sense an urge to bear down. If you don't feel an overwhelming compulsion to push, and you're still experiencing surges (sometimes surges take a brief pause after transition), practice this Descent Breathing, which you can also use in conjunction with pushing.

\*Only use this breath during surges, and the De Stressor in between surges to conserve your energy.

1. Take in a quick and strong inhalation.

2.As you exhale, envision the breath pushing down the back of your throat, through the uterus, and out your vagina. Feel baby being nudged down and out.

#### 3.Repeat.

- If your body tells you it's ready to bear down, do this breathing as you push down (just like you're having a bowel movement - but instead of poop you'll get a baby!)
- This breath stimulates your Natural Expulsive Reflex (the same reflex your body uses to push waste out of your intestines.) Practice this breath during bowel movements.
- This breath sounds similar to the Ujjayi yoga breath.



### ADDITIONAL BREATHING TECHNQIUES

Fill yourself with light + hope, release worry + strain..

- Focus your attention on your breath. Envision
  peace, clarity and courage flowing in with each
  inhalation, while fear, tension and stress flow
  out with every exhalation. You emit a
  brightening glow with each breath, until you
  find yourself enveloped in healing energy.
- Fear is strangled by deep breath. Take a deep and powerful breath in to a slow count of 10 envision your fears being sucked together in a tight ball as you breathe in, then envision this ball of fear being launched out of your body as you exhale to the slow count of 10.
- Envision a vat of morphine being poured into a bulb in your mind. Each time you take a deep in the belly breathe, allow a bit of the "mind morphine" to leak out of the bulb and enter your bloodstream. The deeper your breath, and the higher your belly rises, the more mindmorphine is released, and the more euphonic you feel.
- Close your right nostril with your thumb, take a
  deep breath in, then release your right nostril
  while closing your left nostril with your pointer
  finger and slowly exhale. Repeat this cycle 10
  times. Put all of your attention into the tiny hairs
  in and around your nostrils, noticing how they
  feel as the air flows in and out.

### Prenatal Bonding Exercises



### Play!

No human is ever too young (or old!) to play. Have some fun with your baby by placing a cool object on different areas of your belly and waiting until baby responds with a tap. You can also play by tapping on an area of your belly until you receive the response tap.

### Sometimes there just aren't words to express the depth of your love. The swaying of your body will soothe baby and connect him to your natural rhythm, which may just train him to chill out when he's wiggling in your arms and you commence the Mama Sway.

**Groove Is In the Heart** 



### **Communicative Meditation**

Meditation is more fun when you have someone to do it with. So, meditate with your baby while setting the intent that you're tapping into their "voice" and intuition. With your eyes closed, focus on connecting to the heart-energy of your baby, then ask her questions and listen to the answers that appear in your heart. No pressure - just have fun with it.



### Sing It Out

Belt it mama. Baby won't care if you're Mariah quality or a strictly-shower vocalist- she just wants to hear the sound of your voice and the vibrations of your harmonizing (or, attempts at harmonizing?) Even reading, verbalizing your stream of consciousness, or anything else involving baby being exposed to your unique tones is perfect.

### Video Diary

Letters are fun, but videos are so fun. Make a video at the beginning of each month of pregnancy, reflecting on your emotions, what baby is up to, your predictions for how the birth will go, what movie you're going to see, how the smell of peanut butter makes you gag, and anything else you're inspired to share.









#### **Love Letters**

Write letters to your baby conveying how you're feeling during pregnancy, the current state of world affairs, your pregnancy cravings, how excited you are about baby's arrival, your hopes and predictions about their future and anything else that strikes a chord. The real fun begins when you get to read the letters to your child when they're older.

### **Nesting**

An oldie but goodie. Creating a sanctuary for your baby, and your new self that will emerge after childbirth, helps you align with your shifting reality, and feel like you're doing something tangible and productive for your baby's comfort.

#### **Just Send Love**

If you do nothing else, just focus on sending your baby love, surrounding and filling them with your golden light of warmth and protection. Your love is enough.



>



### YOUR IDEAL BIRTH STORY

Envision yourself moving through each phase of labor in the manner that seems ideal to you, by following these steps. Even if your labor does not happen exactly as you envision, this practice will send you into birth feeling more at ease and optimistic, serving to create a more favorable experience.

- 1. Find a quiet and comfortable space to relax.
- 2. In your mind's eye, envision yourself in the few days proceeding the onset of labor, looking and feeling relaxed and excited, engaging in activities you enjoy and bonding with your family and unborn baby.
- 3. Now, imagine yourself noticing the first signs of labor, being surprised by how well you're handling this shift and how peaceful you feel about the prospect of doing the dang thing.
- 4. Your labor is picking up and you see yourself utilizing techniques to make you more comfortable during this active stage of labor. You have a knowing that your cervix is easily opening.
- 5. Transition is intense, but serves as a type of spiritual experience, connecting you with your deepest powers. You move through it quickly, feeling like a total goddess, grounded on Earth but dancing in the heavens.
- 6. It's time for baby to emerge! Your body begins bearing down when it has the uncontrollable urge to do so and you're able to breathe through it all, expressing an innate knowledge of how to support your body.

Now, feel and see yourself holding your new baby in your arms. Feel her silken skin, smell her perfect scent, breathe that baby in and fill her with your love. 8. Hey! Check you out! You and babe are breastfeeding like champs! Your colostrum is flowing out in the perfect amount and baby is sucking down that liquid gold. 9. Feel it, see it, believe it, then write down the story that you envisioned. 10. After you write the story, let it go, trusting that you've done all you can by setting a positive intention, and that it will unfold in the exact way it needs to.











Kick off your preparations by completing the following to-dos before The Day:

### **1.Create Your Baby Zones**

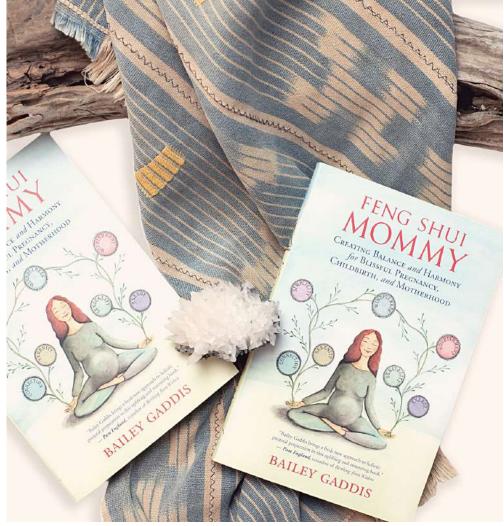
Babies have a sneaky way of taking over every inch of your house if you don't designate specific areas for them. For example, set up a changing zone in one room of your house (or two if your home is spread out), and an always stocked and organized diaper bag you can grab for on-the-go changes (like blowouts so messy it's best to bring the supplies to baby.)

In addition, consider setting up play zones, feeding zones, sleep zones, dressing zones, and any other zones you think your baby will need. While tiny socks and colorful chunks of plastic will still find their way into non-baby zones, you'll be better equipped to maintain a semblance of control over the state of your with-child home.

### 2.Organize Your Must Have Supplies

Now that you've decided what zones you want to set up, and where they'll be, you can start stocking these areas with supplies. Keep your zones and life simple by only inviting in items you're fairly certain you'll use. A few supplies many moms find essential in their homes are a baby monitor, clothing ranging in size from 3-6 months, burp cloths, diapers, wipes, changing pads, a first aid and hygiene kit, night-light, and baby carrier. Every mom will have a slightly different list of essential supplies – to craft yours think through the various elements of your life and how they will relate to life with a baby, jotting down items you believe will make each area of your life easier.





### 3. Choose a Pediatrician

If your baby wakes up in the middle of the night with a high fever, or you just think they're making weird sounds in their sleep, it's nice having a pediatrician you trust to call up.

Start collecting a list of pediatricians to interview by getting recommendations from other parents in your area, or mom groups you resonate with, then do online research on each recommendation.

Next, make an appointment with your favorites to see if you have a match. Finally, lock in your fave.

### **4.Line Up Your Support Team**

You deserve help after your baby is born. So don't wait for your hands and mind to be mega-full before organizing postpartum support. Think about your friends and family who live near you, or might be willing to stay with you after baby is born, that you can ask for specific types of help.

Reach out to these special people, ask for their help, and if they're willing, set up specific days and time periods they'll support you each week during the first three months of baby's life. You can ask certain people to help you with cleaning, others with cooking, some with baby care, and you may just want a few people who will come over on a regular basis to talk. While it can be hard to ask for this help the eventual payoff is so worth it for you and baby.

### 5.Read About the Fourth Trimester

Find a book (like my book Feng

Shui Mommy!) that covers what you can expect in the first three months of baby's life – the "fourth trimester." Helpful topics include postpartum symptoms, baby care questions, breastfeeding support (if you're choosing to breastfeed), and techniques for bonding.

Although every mother-baby pair will have a different experience, a few layers of anxiety can be wiped away by filling yourself with basic and non-threatening information.

Extra points if you can find reading material that's both informative and humorous - laughing helps to strengthen those abs!







### 6.Make Your List of "Must Dos", "Ask For Helps", and "Let Gos"

Because having a baby turns your priorities on their heads, premeditate these shifts in priorities (as much as possible), and organize your life accordingly.

To do this, first make a list of activities you absolutely cannot live without, for example, showering and exercising these will be the essentials you make sure you get to almost every day. Next, make a list of tasks you'll need completed but want to delegate, for example, cooking and cleaning - figure out who will tackle these tasks before baby arrives. Last, make a list of the tasks and priorities you can temporarily set aside as you adjust to your new life. for example, having done up hair and makeup, or engaging in an

hour long call with your best friend every week – you'll be pleased to discover that by your baby's first birthday most of these activities will already be back in your life. While these lists are flexible and might need to be shifted as you navigate your new reality, you'll be much more set up for a healthy and happy period of adjustment.

### 7.Practice Your Go-To Relaxation Tools

A big secret of motherhood is that it can be really stressful – no one ever talks about it... But really, you need tools to soothe those stressor hormones when you're operating on less than four hours of sleep, covered in spit-up, and can't remember the last time your newborn wasn't crying. Practice "quickie" relaxation techniques like deep

breathing, affirmations, a few jumping jacks, or meditation moments (meditating on a beautiful flower, the softness of your baby's skin, or any other pleasure-inducing thing or thought for a few moments), and see what is most effective for calming your nerves.

Then, when baby has you up at 4am and you stub your toe while walking to the changing table, you know to immediately take three deep breathing and do 15 jumping jacks. You got this.



### GOOD AIR QUALITY

The air you breathe translates into the energy you breathe- this energetic oxygen is absorbed by your baby, affecting how his developmental building blocks are pieced together. Gift yourself and your babe with clean air by opening the nursery windows when the weather is nice (placing a window guard in the window when your baby becomes mobile and curious), or by placing one or more of the following air-purifying plants in the nursery, making sure they're out of baby's reach: peace lily, spider plant or bamboo palm. These plants remove toxic agents such as trichloroethylene, formaldehyde, benzene, and xylene from the air — toxins that create symptoms like dizziness, nausea, drowsiness and headache. Yuck! Say yes to clean air.

### CLUTTER FREE

Good + happy energy is in a love affair with simplicity. Clutter is confusing — it confuses the energy in your outer environment, which translates into a chaotic inner environment. And your baby's inner environment is already chaotic and confusing enough, what with the whole "learning how to navigate and process a brand new world" thing. Make their life (and yours!) easier by donating any items that don't bring immense joy or usefulness to your lives.

Added Bonus: A clutter-free home equals less random stuff for Baby to put in her mouth. So while you're decluttering the nursery, you're also babyproofing.











### SOOTHING LIGHTING

Serenity emanates from positive lighting, and negative lighting drains it away. Because light is one of the strongest sources of energy, its intentional use is a crucial ingredient for the nest of love you're creating. So first, take an oath with yourself to keep any fluorescent lighting in the room in a permanent "off" positionfluorescent lighting is a prime killer of good energy. Next, focus on filling the darkness with soft, warm, and well-placed lighting. Natural light is queen during the day, so open up your blinds and let the good vibes (and vitamin D!) flow in. When the sun is sleeping, turn on at least three sources of light at three different levels in the room you're occupying; one floor lamp and two tabletop lamps, for example, create a lovely lighting scenario. And because babies and cords are often equivalent to cats and yarn, make sure all cords are out of Baby's reach.

### OPTIMAL COLORS

Colors emit messages that are absorbed by the eyes, perceived in the mind, and felt in the soul. The colors surrounding you and Baby should be harmonious with the needs within you both. Because babies are mega-channels of the energy around them, it's in your favor to keep the colors in the primary spaces Baby will occupy soft and soothing - think gentle Earth tones, or Easter-pastel chic. Beige is a favorite for many a nursery wall because it's an enhancer of clarity and calm and promotes nourishment, inner balance, stability, and health — good stuff for you and Babe.

### CALMING FOCAL POINTS

If all you have to look at in the nursery is a diaper pail, and other functional but (let's be honest) kind of boring items or pieces of furniture, the nursery may invoke an energy of "all work and no play," instead of "plenty of work mixed with lots of love and joy." So to get that love and joy flowing, place a few key items in the room that serve as visually appealing focal points. A few of my nursery room favorites include a pink Himalayan salt crystal lamp, light-refracting crystal hung in the window (super magical when witnessed at the right time of day,) or windchime you can stimulate whenever you need a reminder to just breathe.

Plush carpets, expensive furniture and designer linens can be lovely, but they're not prerequisites for having a nursery or bedroom that you love being in. Making the environmental shifts listed above will open up your world to lighter emotions and expanded thinking, serving to elevate your precious time spent with your child.







# GUIDE TO COLORS FOR THE NURSERY





### **Orange**

The guru of success, fresh life and renewal. Orange radiates zesty fun, pulling you out of the monotonous by sparking fresh ideas and enthusiasm for creating powerful shifts in your life. Hold something orange when you need an extra dose of inspiration.





### Yellow

The golden guru of inner warmth, hope and miracles. You can soak in the warming effects of yellow during all waking hours by indirectly gazing into the glint of the sun, the glow of a lamp, or a favorite yellow item. If you feel yourself sinking into a funk, seek out something in a shade of yellow, focusing on the hue until you become aware of your brightened spirit.

### Red

The guru of courage and adventure. Red evokes vitality and passion, serving to enliven your physicality if you're feeling drained. Hang an image that's heavy with the tone of red in the nursery to focus on when you need an energy boost.

### **Pink**

The guru of nourishment and creativity. Pink ignites whimsy and imagination, guiding you into a dreamy contemplative space where you can play with ideas without being weighed down by their potential pitfalls. Place a pink Himalayan salt crystal lamp in the nursery to invite in a nurturing presence.







### **Purple**

The guru of grace, honor and exploration. Purple inspires the spirit to dive into its past, unearthing forgotten "knowings" and wisdom. This regal color supports you in realizing your highest ideals, which can serve as your beacon of intention. This is a helpful color to have near when you're creating your birth preferences.

### Blue

The guru of fluid serenity. Blue demands nothing of you, allowing you to just be. Blue is a wonderful color to lean into when life seems chaotic and overwhelming, because it leads you back to your loving center, inspiring a deep trust for the voice of your intuition. Blue was my "birth color" (the color I focused on during birth), and the birth color of many of my clients, because of it's calming nature.

### Light Brown/Beige

The guru of simplicity. I'd like to reframe the common misconception of beige as "boring or bland" to "an enhancer of clarity and calm." Beige is a favorite feng shui color for nursery rooms as it promotes nourishment, inner balance, stability and health - good stuff for mom and babe.

### Green

The guru of health and renewal. Green is a direct link to the natural world and the wisdom of Mother Nature.

Green helps to harmonize your heart energy with your emotions, supporting you in times of transformation and rebirth. This color can be good inspiration if you need to make big decisions or begin new projects.

# Preparing for Baby

# Nesting Checklist



### NESTING CHECKLIST



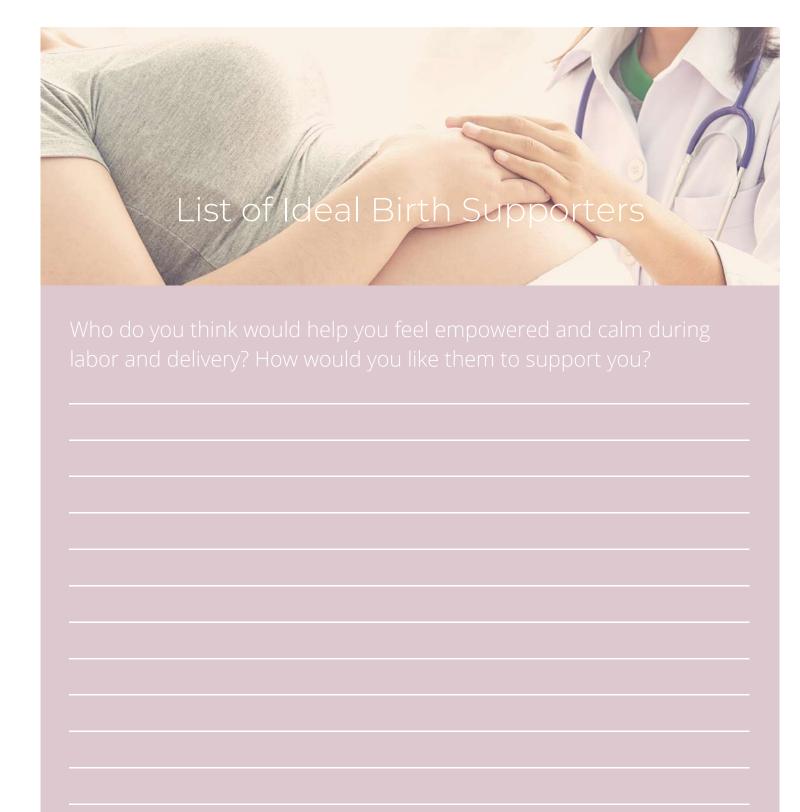




## ESSENTIAL ITEMS FOR BABY REGISTRY

Diapers and baby wipes!
Diaper Changing Pad and Cover
Diaper Caddy
Diaper Bag
Organic Cotton Onesies, socks, pants, cap, and sweater
Sleep Sack
Burp Cloths
Baby Monitor
Car Seat Car Seat
Backseat Baby Mirror
Crib or bedside sleeper and fitted sheet
Breast Pump
Bottle Set
Infant Tub
Infant Toiletry Kit (get a NoseFrida!)
Baby Carrier (like an ErgoBaby)







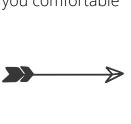


<b>&gt;</b>



USE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO HELP DETERMINE WHERE YOU'D LIKE TO GIVE BIRTH.

- Will you feel more comfortable with hospital support close by? Or, will a medical atmosphere cause you anxiety?
- Do you feel safest in your home?
- Do you have a medical condition that would make it risky for you to deliver at home, or in a birth center?
- Are you concerned you'll be tempted to request medical intervention if you're at the hospital? Do you feel this intervention would prevent you from having the type of birth you're hoping for?
- Do you have a medical care provider you love, and are certain you want them to attend your birth? What locations are they able to attend births in?
- What options does your health insurance cover?
- Where would you like to receive your prenatal care?
- Would you like a water birth? (Water births are more common in birth centers or home births.)
- How long does it take you to drive to the birth location in traffic? Are you comfortable with that commute?

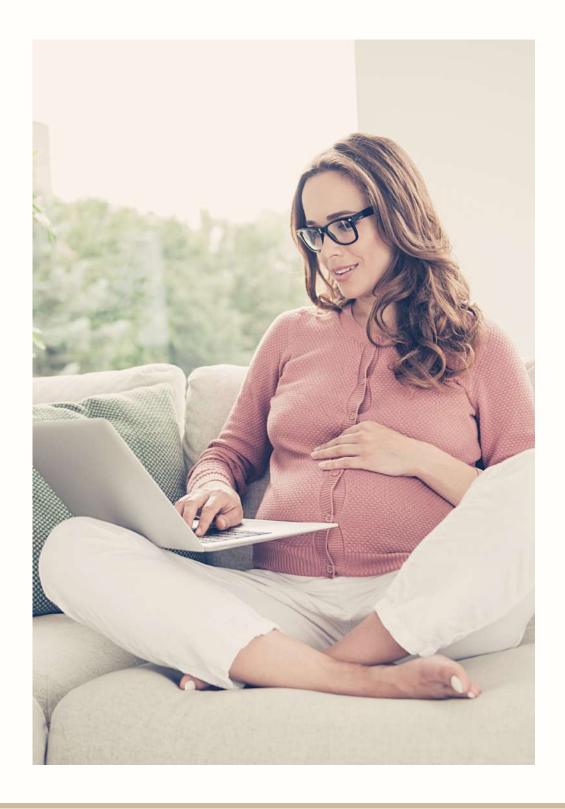






- Are you at risk for preterm labor? If so, you may want to find a hospital with an excellent NICU (neonatal intensive care unit.)
- If you're considering a hospital, what is their cesarean birth rate? If you would like to avoid a cesarean birth, consider finding a hospital that is more inclined to support vaginal births.
- For a hospital birth, what is the nurse-topatient ratio?
- What is the center's postpartum care protocol? Do they support immediate skinto-skin? Do they allow the baby to stay with mom at all times? (If both mom and baby are healthy.) How long is the typical stay after a birth?
- If you're considering a birth center, is it accredited by the Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers? How often do they transfer to a hospital? What professionals do they have on staff, or utilize as consultants?

# HOSPITAL TOUR QUESTIONS



### HOSPITAL TOUR QUESTIONS

- How has your protocol changed since Covid-19?
- How many people will be allowed in my room?
- Will I ever have to be separated from my birth companion or baby?
- Am I guaranteed a private room? If not, what are the chances that I'll have to share?
- Will I have access to a private tub and/or shower?
- Are all the labor and delivery rooms similar to the one we're being shown?
- Will I be moved to a different room after my baby is born?
- Am I allowed to use a flame-free essential oil diffuser?
- Am I required to bring my own birth ball?
- Do you have squat bars and birthing stools?
- Do you have wireless fetal monitors?
- How receptive are your nurses to birth preferences?
- How receptive are your care providers to csection birth preferences? Are they familiar with the idea of a gentle c-section?
- How familiar are the nurses with supporting unmedicated births?
- How fast can I receive an epidural?









- What is the hospital's c-section rate?
- Do you allow water births?
- Are recording devices allowed in the delivery room?
- What's your policy on eating and drinking during labor?
- Is delayed cord clamping supported?
- Will I have access to a lactation consultant after birth?
- Can I complete the necessary paperwork early?
- How do I enter the hospital after hours?
- How long can I expect to stay in the hospital before being discharged?







# **HOSPITAL TOUR NOTES**

# JOURNAL PROMPTS



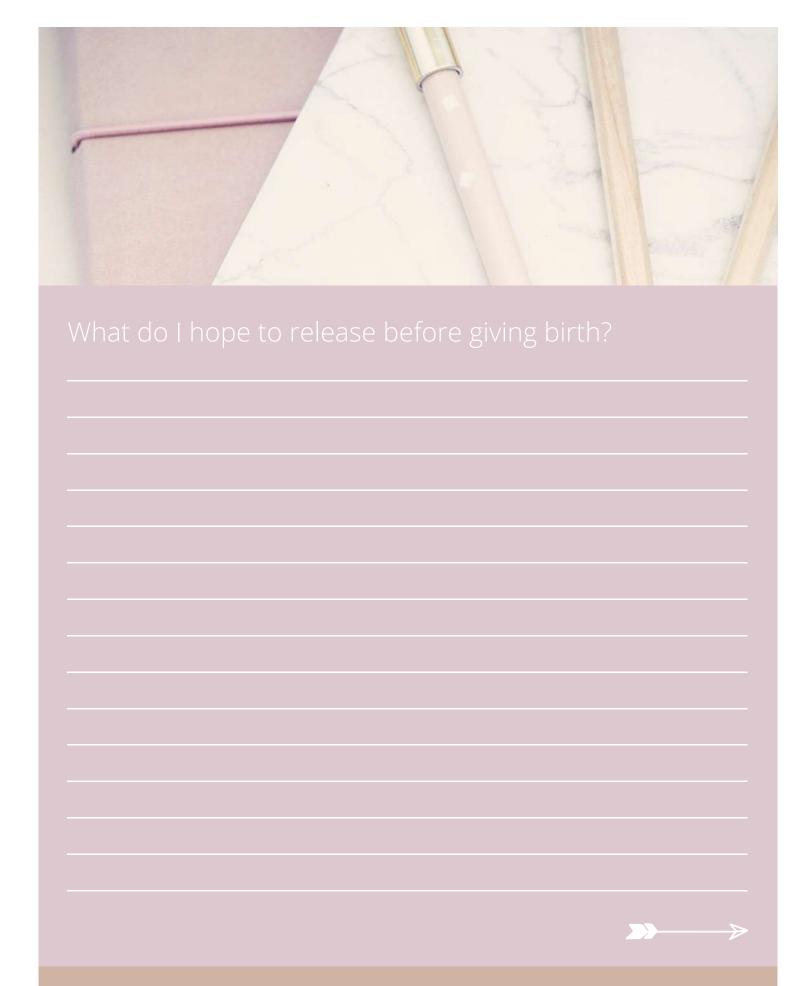




















#### BIRTH AFFIRMATIONS



I relax my face, nourish my lungs, float deep into my mind, and have the birth I'm meant to have.



I just need to ride one surge at a time and my baby will be born.



The intensity of labor is not stronger than me, because it is all a piece of me.



My body and baby believe I can give // birth, so I can.



I offer compassion to my surges, // dissolving resistance.



I will follow my truth during birth, instead of the truth society pushes on me.



Just. Keep. Breathing.



More and more pain-relieving endorphins are released with each surge.



I give unconditional optimism to my birth – even if it doesn't turn out the way I expect, it will be filled with love.





#### BIRTH AFFIRMATIONS

- My labor will unfold in the exact time frame it needs.
- I become more and more patient as I near my baby's birth.
- By surrendering to my body, I take charge of my experience.
- My instincts will guide me through my baby's birth.
- My baby will support me in making decisions on our birth journey.
- Open open open. Release release release.
- I will focus on solutions rather than challenges during birth.
- I harness my innate power during birth.
- Any pain I experience enhances my capacity for love.
- I trust that I have thoroughly prepared, and everything will happen as it should.



#### **BIRTH AFFIRMATIONS**

- Each surge serves a purpose. Each surge brings me closer to my baby.
- There is no space for judgment in my birth experience.
- l easily fill my baby with loving oxygen.
- The process of birth is just as natural as the beating of my heart.
- My birth will write its own definition of "ideal."
- I feel thanks for every surge.
- Any pain I feel is incomparable to the love that will soon flood me.
- My baby knows the exact moment to be born.







#### Customized Birth Affirmations

more trusting of the birth journey.





# Vaginal Birth Preferences





## ONSET OF LABOR

**Instructions:** Edit this list until it reflects your ideal vision of birth. Then, print three copies and take one to a prenatal appointment, going over each point with your care provider. Bring the remaining copies to your birth.

**Template Download Link:** yourserenelife.wordpress.com/birth-preferences/

#### We request:

- \*To consider inducement only if onset of labor is unusually delayed and if there is medical urgency. Please be open to our natural induction methods.
- \*To have the following people present during my birthing: [Insert birth companion name] [Insert doula name]
- \*To decline administration of heparin lock upon admission.
- \*To decline discussion of pain tolerance and pain levels.





### THINNING + OPENING

#### We request:

\*Only necessary hospital staff please. We ask that staff honor our need for quiet and refrain from references to "pain", "hurt", or any offer of medication, unless requested.

\*To be free of blood pressure cuff and fetal monitors between readings.

\*Minimal number of vaginal exams - with permission - to avoid premature release of membranes.

\*To use natural oxytocin stimulation in the event of a stalled or slow labor.

\*To be fully apprised and consulted before the introduction of any medical procedure.

\*To birth in an atmosphere of gentle encouragement during the final birthing phase with only one person at a time coaching me. Please use calm, low tones.





### FOR BABY

#### We request:

- \*Delayed cord clamping and cutting until after pulsation has ceased.
- \*Delayed use of Erythromycin, or other salve for baby's eyes, to allow optimal sight for bonding.
- \*Oral Vitamin K to be used if it is available; if not, delay injection until after baby is acclimated.
- \*Breast feeding only. No bottles, formula, pacifier, or artificial nipples.
- \*For baby to be weighed in room.
- \*Minimal interruptions, and quiet voices after birth.

We thank you in advance for your support + attention to our choices. We know you join us in looking forward to a beautiful birth.

# VAGINAL BIRTH PREFERENCES NOTES

## Cesarean Birth Preferences





#### GENTLE C-SECTION PREFERENCES

Template Download Link: yourserenelife.wordpress.com/birth-preferences/

A common source of resistance towards a c-section is lack of control. Women often feel that because surgeons perform the delivery, they'll lose their sense of empowerment. But this doesn't have to be the case. In the absence of an emergency, many hospitals are becoming more open to moms exercising their right to have a voice in how their c-section plays out. Here are preferences that can help you reclaim a sense of control and empowerment, and have a gentle c-section.

#### We request:

\*To have arms free during operation.

Being strapped down isn't fun. Request that your arms remain unbound so you can hold baby as soon as possible after delivery.

\*To have skin-to-skin directly after baby is born.

Skin-to-skin contact in the first hour after delivery stimulates the release of oxytocin in you and baby, and supports the eventual act of breastfeeding, if that's something you're wanting to do.





\*To have screen dropped the moment baby is lifted out.

Seeing baby's arrival is a powerful experience, especially for moms who cannot physically feel the emergence. If you're comfortable having the screen at your waist lowered as baby is pulled out of the uterus, it could help you feel a deeper connection to your birth and baby.

\*For medical staff to refrain from personal conversations.

Hearing about the anesthesiologist's weekend plans is unlikely to hold the supportive messages you want to be hearing as your baby is born. Request that all people in the operating room refrain from personal conversation and instead opt for encouraging words for you.

\*To have music or recording of choice playing during operation.

Having your own music or guided meditation playing during the c-section allows you to set the tone for the experience, as sound has a powerful impact over an environment.

\*To have nasal cannula instead of facemask for oxygen.

If possible, ask that you be given oxygen via a nasal cannula instead of a facemask, as the mask can make some moms feel claustrophobic.

# CESAREAN BIRTH PREFERENCES NOTES



## TOP 10 PAIN RELIEVING TIPS FOR CHILDBIRTH

BREATHING

Taking long, deep breaths is by far one of the best ways to naturally reduce pain, and give your uterus plenty of room to surge. Go to page 29 to see my recommended breathing techniques.

2 DEEP PRESSURE ON LOWER BACK

Having your birth companion apply pressure to your lower back with their palms, or tennis balls, can do wonders for breaking up the tension, and resulting pain, that can gather in this area during birth. Go to page 96 to see where the best pain-relieving pressure points in the lower back are located. In addition, sit on a birth ball, and lean forward onto a stack of pillows on a bed or couch, as this position provides easy access to your back, relives tension in your hips, and takes pressure off your spine.

3 CHANGING POSITIONS

Remaining in one position for too long can lead to tense muscles, which can inhibit deep breathing and enhance discomfort. Avoid this by changing your position when you find you're having trouble taking deep breaths during surges. I also recommend sitting on the toilet every 30-minutes, as this is a position the body associates with expansion and release.

HIP SWIRLS

4

Circular hip movements during experiences that are usually processed as painful send signals to receptors in your brain, telling them to minimize their perception of pain. And so, swirling is the most organic movement to flow into during surges, helping pain funnel down and out, and replacing it with a rush of endorphins. These circular motions also help baby progress downward. If you feel lingering tension after a surge, continue the swirling until the tightness has loosened. Prenatal hip swirls also strengthen your abdominal wall, serving to minimize chances of Diastasis Recti (abdominal separation), reduce back pain, and make your surges more effective.









### 5 ENVISIONING SURRENDERING TO THE SENSATIONS

As labor surges wash through you, just keep thinking or saying, "I surrender," as this will help dissolve tension and resistance that can intensify pain. Envision this acceptance fostering an opening and softening in your body.

#### USE THE BATHROOM REGULARLY

It can be tricky to tune in to your body's need to urinate or have a bowel movement during labor. This can lead to complications, as a full bladder or packed bowels can increase discomfort, and potentially block baby's path. Keep that path clear by going to the bathroom ever 30 to 45 minutes, even if you don't feel like you need to.

Tip: Put a few drops of peppermint essential oil in the toilet bowl if you have difficulty urinating.

#### GET IN WARM WATER

6

Slipping into a warm shower or tub can significantly enhancing the birthing experience by...

- Melting tension in birthing muscles (which reduces pain!)
- Minimizing anxiety
- Reviving energy levels
- Making surges more effective
- Increasing oxygen to birthing muscles and baby
- Improving the elasticity of the perineum
- Providing privacy and lowering inhibitions

Warm baths can be so effective for pain relief some refer to them as an "aquadural."







### 8 ENVISION "MORPHINE WATER"

As you sit in that warm bath or shower, pretend that the water has the same effects of morphine, and can wash away your discomfort. Let yourself drift into a fuzzy "cotton candy" like haze where your mind settles into a lovely dream state, while your body keeps on doing what it needs to do to birth. You can also envision morphine entering your body every time you take a sip of water.

### PRESSING ON PRESSURE POINT LI - 4

Applying pressure to the LI – 4 point (see a visual on page 98), which is located between the base of your thumb and index finger, promotes overall pain relief and relaxation. As you feel a surge coming on press on this point, adjusting the pressure until you feel relief.

#### 10 AROMATHERAPY

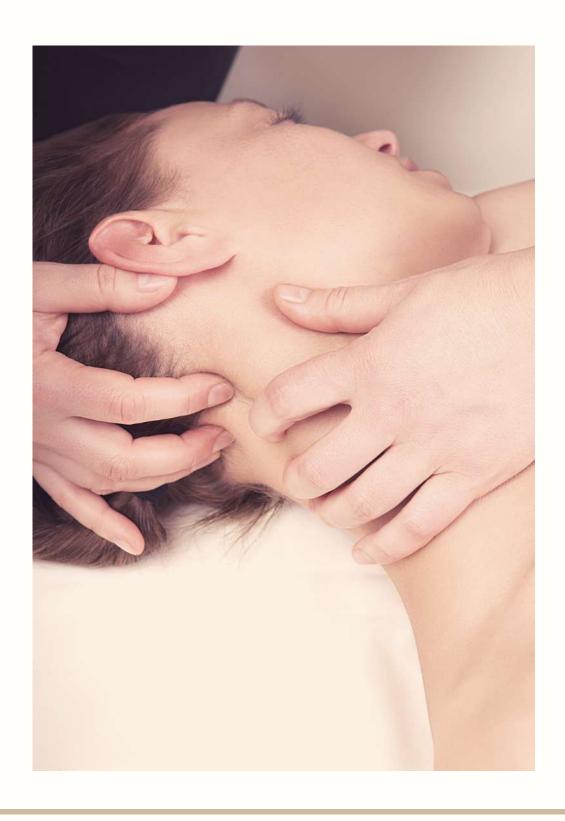
Soothing aromas, such as lavender, can help your mind and body let go of tension and create more space for the body to surge and open.







# PAIN RELIEVING PRESSURE POINTS



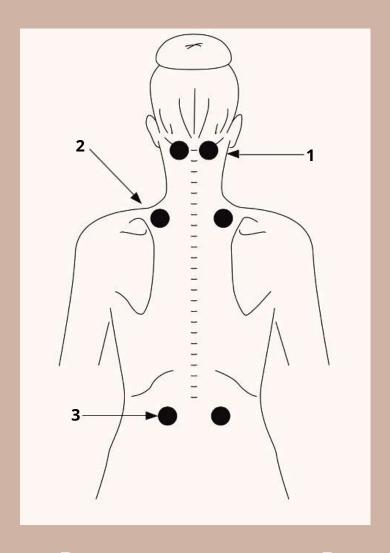
### **Pain Relieving Pressure Points**

Applying pressure to the endpoints of certain meridians (pathways in the body where vital energy flows) can help reduce discomfort during labor (or at any time!)

Following are graphics of various points you, or your companion, can apply pressure to during labor. Some may feel wonderful; some may feel like torture. Guide your companion, telling them what points feel good and how much pressure you require. If you desire deeper pressure you can request your companion use their thumbs, knuckles elbows, or even a tennis ball to get all up in there.



### Points on Neck + Back



1

#### POINTS ON UPPER NECK

Applying pressure to the points located at the base of the skull, in the indentations on both sides of the neck, releases endorphins, alleviates discomfort in the head and pressure in eyes, and increases energy levels.

2

#### **POINTS ON SHOULDERS**

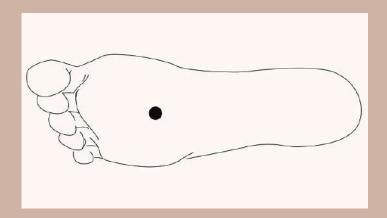
Applying pressure to the points located on the shoulders halfway between the rotator cuffs and spine reduces discomfort in the neck and shoulders, and may facilitate the release of the placenta after birth.

3

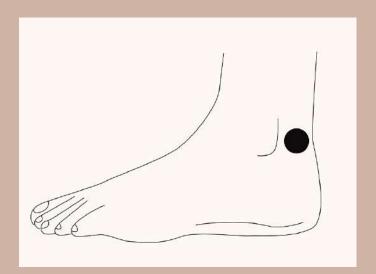
#### POINTS ON LOWER BACK

Applying pressure to the points located in the dimples usually found one to two inches away from both sides of the base of the spine, may induce labor and reduce discomfort in the lower back.



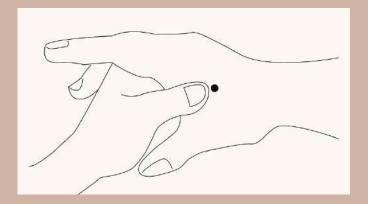


This point is located in the depression that appears in the upper middle portion of the sole of the foot when it is flexed. Applying pressure to this point may reduce anxiety, dizziness, headaches, neck pain and nausea.



This point is located on the outside of the foot between the Achilles tendon and anklebone. Applying pressure to this point may induce labor, reduce pain in the lower back, and bring more general comfort to a difficult labor.





The LI – 4 point is located between the web of the thumb and pointer finger at the highest point of the muscle. Applying pressure to this point may induce labor, reduce overall labor discomfort, and relieve headaches.



Compressing the hips and lower back with this hip squeeze technique can significantly reduce discomfort, and encourage baby to move down and out. To do, give your partner access to your back, preferably by leaning forward onto a bed or birthing ball. Next, have them place their palms on the fleshy part of each side of your hips, with their fingertips facing each other and hands parallel to the ground. Now, they should apply pressure down and in. Have them toy around with hand positioning and pressure until a resounding "yes!" releases within you.

# BIRTH POSITIONS







#### YOURSERENELIEE.COM



#### FINDING YOUR FAVORITE BIRTH POSITIONS

I recommend testing out birth positions during pregnancy to help you understand how your body responds to each. Be gentle with yourself as you practice, making adjustments as needed and taking a moment in each position to notice what you like and dislike about the orientation of your body. First, do a body scan from the top of your head to the tips of your toes, noticing how each nook and crevice of your body responds to the position. Then, go deeper into your inquiry by asking the following questions:

- How easily can I breathe in this position? Readjust in the position until you find the sweet spot where your lungs can easily claim oxygen.
- Do my legs feel strong in this position? If not, do you feel drawn to practice this position daily to build up your strength?
- Do I feel strained in this position? If so, do you need to utilize more gentle stretching exercises to limber up before you move into birth?
- Does my pelvic region feel open and relaxed in this position? Yes? This position could be your hero during birth, serving to widen the birth path and shorten labor.



- Does this position connect me with the pull of gravity? Do you feel a sensation of baby being slightly pulled down in this position? Good.
- Does this position make me feel emotionally and physically supported by my birth companion? A position that creates an exchange of energy between you and your companion could serve to bolster your courage and determination during birth. If the position allows you to have a make-out session with your hun, even better; a relaxed mouth creates a relaxed vagina.
- What feels good? Find what you like and keep doing that.





### LIST OF FAVORITE BIRTH POSITIONS



#### HOSPITAL PACKING CHECKLIST

Portable speaker and headphones, in addition to birth playlist and guided meditations
Battery powered candles
Post-birth bathrobe and additional clothing for each day of estimated stay
Nursing bras and pads
Toiletries (eyes, mouth, face, body, hair, etc. – don't forget hair ties!)
Reusable water Bottle with metal straw
Breath mints
Protein rich snacks

#### HOSPITAL PACKING CHECKLIST

Special treat for after labor
Optional
Kit for placenta storage
For Baby
Car seat (Install car seat at least two weeks before due date, if possible)











# HOME BIRTH CHECKLIST 3 MONTHS BEFORE DUE DATE

- Select your care providers and additional support (E.g., midwife, birth doula, and backup OB/GYN)
- Arrange for someone to be oncall to care for your children and/or pets when you go into labor
- Select the birthing space
- Order birth tub, hose and shower hose adapter
- Assemble Birth Supplies:
   birthing ball, sanitized sheets,
   plastic bottom sheet, towels,
   receiving blankets, premade
   birth kit (order online),
   essential oils and diffuser,
   perineal massage oil, and
   anything else the midwife
   recommends



# BIRTH SPACE CHECKLIST WEEKS BEFORE DUE DATE

- Declutter
- Have someone else readjust furniture (if needed)
- Remove or cover rugs, furniture and other items that could be stained during birth
- Gather and store the birth supplies
- Set up a focal point, and other extra supplies



# ADDITIONAL TASKS TO PREPARE FOR YOUR HOME BIRTH

		_





#### Important Person Contact List

contact information for everyone you will (or might) need to contact during labor. For example, your midwife, doula, back OB/GYN, and other labor supporters.



#### Onset of Labor Checklist

This list is for your birth companion. All you need to do when you go into labor is breathe, and do whatever else you feel like.

- Take a deep breath.
- See if mom wants to rest, bathe, eat, or listen to soothing music.
- Call care provider (Ask your care provider when they want you to call. Most say, "when surges are 4-5 minutes apart" or, "when surges are so strong mom can't talk through them.")
- Call doula. DO NOT call family until you 100% know this is happening.
- (For non-home birth) Make sure bag is ready to go and ensure house and any animals or children are set before departure.
- (For home birth) Prep bed by putting regular sheets on, then a plastic sheet, then freshly washed birth sheets on top.
- (For home birth) Set up birthing tub and make any last-minute adjustments to birth room.
- Create serene environment in birth space. Turn on low lighting, start playing soothing music or meditation recording, put out mom's focal point, and do anything else that promotes calm.

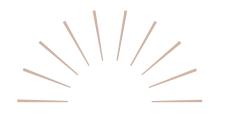


#### Active Labor Checklist

- Remind mom to go to the bathroom every 30-minutes.
   Tip: Put a few drops of peppermint oil in the toilet bowl if she has trouble peeing.
- Give mom water between each surge.
- Make sure mom is breathing. Ask her to breathe with you. Don't tell her to "just breathe."
- Give her a jaw massage if you notice her clenching it.
- Cycle through the pressure point suggestions on page 94 until you find one that feels good for mom.
- (For hospital birth) Ask for a new nurse if the one assigned makes mom uncomfortable
- Help mom regulate her temperature by providing a cool washcloth when she's hot and a cozy blanket when she's cold.
- Stay attuned to mom, making new suggestions for breathing, positions, getting in water, aromatherapy, or any other relaxation techniques if you notice her tensing or having trouble breathing.

### Journal Prompts



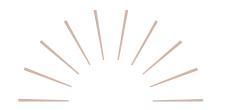


#### WHAT WOULD MY IDEAL BIRTH LOOK LIKE?



## HOW DO I FEEL ABOUT MY CARE PROVIDERS?

	·	



## WHAT TYPES OF THOUGHTS DOIWANT IN MY MIND DURING BIRTH?




## DOIHAVE ANY RESIDUAL FEARS ABOUT BIRTHING I NEED TO RELEASE?



## ARE THERE ANY LINGERING QUESTIONS ABOUT CHILDBIRTH I NEED ANSWERED?




## WHAT CAN I DO TO ENSURE I FEEL EMPOWERED DURING BIRTH?





## BABY'S STATS

Weight:

Length:

Head Circumference:

Date of Birth:

Time of Birth

APGAR Score:

Hair Color:

Eye Color:

Blood Type:

Medical Needs:

Feeding Times:

Immunizations:

Other Notes:



### POSTPARTUM RECOVERY KIT



#### POSTPARTUM RECOVERY KIT (FOR BOTH VAGINAL + CESAREAN BIRTHS)

#### SITZ BATH

This just consists of soaking your perineum in warm water, which can ease pain and itching. You can also ask your care provider if there are medications or additives you can put in the water to aid healing. If you'd rather not bother with sanitizing your bathtub, purchase a sitz bath kit that fits in the toilet and allows you to dunk your perineum. As an added bonus, a sitz bath also works wonders on hemorrhoids! Yay!

#### WITCH HAZEL PADS

These medicated pad liners – soaked in witch hazel extract - are the vagina's best friend, offering instant cooling relief when slipped in the underwear.

#### ANESTHETIC SPRAY

In addition to the witch hazel pads, ask your care provider about an anesthetic spray they recommend to numb the perineum.

- FIBER RICH FOODS
- STOOL SOFTENER
- OTC PAIN MEDICATION, LIKE ADVIL AND TYLENOL

#### BREASTFEEDING PILLOW

This takes pressure off your abdomen when you're feeding, or just holding, baby.







#### C-SECTION UNDIES

These high-waisted, supportive underwear often include a silicone panel to speed scar recovery.

#### SCAR BALM

This healing balm can reduce the appearance of scars, and minimize itchiness. It also does wonders for stretch marks.

#### HEAVY-DUTY MATERNITY PADS

Beyond capturing the blood, these bulky beauties help you feel solidarity with your diaper-wearing baby.

#### LOOSE, BREASTFEEDING-FRIENDLY CLOTHING

Essentially, stay away from anything that has a waistband lower than your under-boobs. And stick to breathable, super comfy materials.

#### PRENATAL VITAMINS

Your body will likely be depleted after going through birth. These vitamins help you get through it.

#### THE FIRST FORTY DAYS

This book, by Amely Greeven, Heng Ou, and Marisa Belger, will help you nurture your postpartum self.







#### POSTPARTUM BELLY WRAP

While it hasn't been proven that these things actually work, many women swear they sped their recovery, and made their abdomen feel less vulnerable.

#### YOUR FAVORITE HEALTHY SNACKS

While you'll hopefully have someone on-hand to make you healthy meals, it can still be nice to stock up on easy, nutritious nosh you can store near your recovery area.

#### REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE

#### ELECTROLYTE REPLENISHER

Slip this powder into that water bottle to ensure you're maintaining optimal hydration.

#### NETFLIX

\*I didn't include nipple salve because I've found that expressing a bit of breastmilk, dabbing it on sore nipples, and letting it dry works better than any store-bought product.







## ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR RECOVERY KIT



## TIPS FOR BONDING WITH BABY







If you're having trouble figuring out the best way to bond, focus on stimulating baby's five senses - one at a time.

First focus on exciting baby's sense of sight by showing him a striking image with bold colors, or taking him on a walk outside, frequently pausing to examine leaves or bark.

Then, place your attention on rousing baby's sense of smell by allowing her to smell a tissue with a few drops of a pleasant essential oil, like lavender or orange oil, or walk outside after your partner cuts the grass.

Next, stimulate baby's sense of touch by giving him a massage, or cradling him to your body and gently stroking his scalp.

Now it's time to awaken her sense of taste by allowing her to feed via breast or bottle.

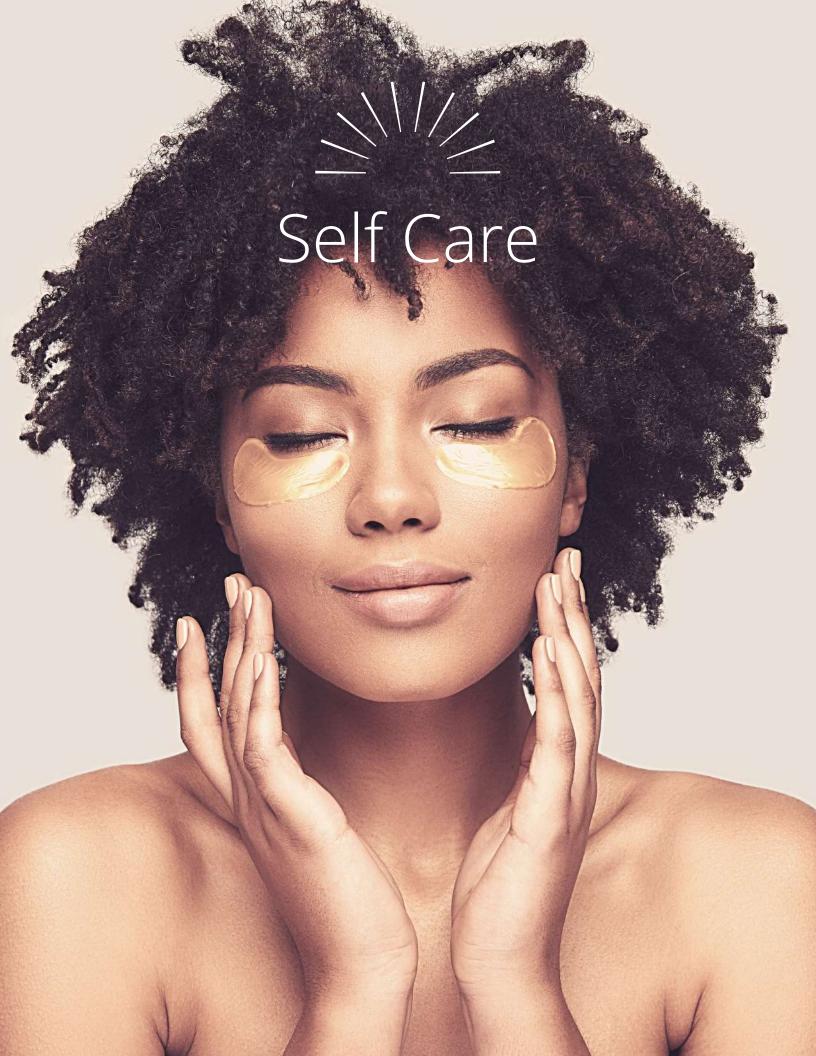
Finally, intrigue his sense of sound by singing a lulling tune, or playing your favorite song.

Here are a few more sense stimulating ideas:

- Talk to Baby. Chat about anything- the color of their poop, the 2008 financial meltdown, the best plan of attack for eating a funnel cake, whatever.
- Sing to Baby. Sing the tones loud and proud, even if you're deaf to them - baby doesn't care.
- Play With Baby. Clean, hike, cook, drum, rattle stuff your "playtime" doesn't need to be under the umbrella of traditional play; as long as you're doing something with your baby, and communicating with them while doing it, they'll have a blast.



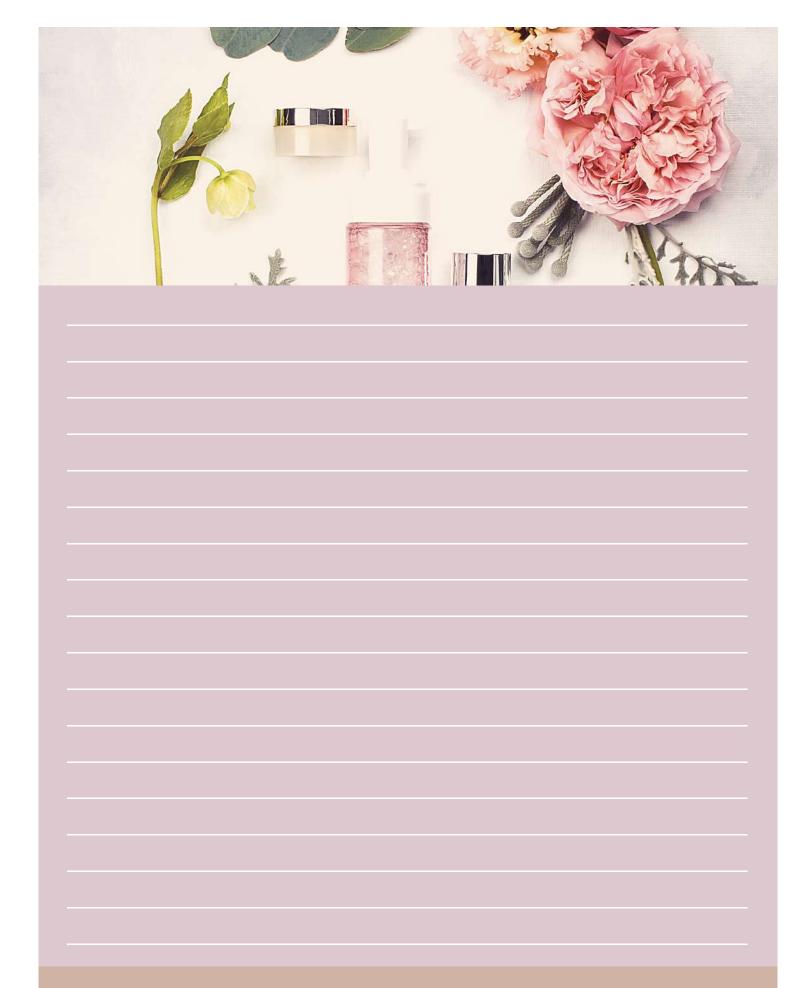
## ADDITIONAL PREFERRED BONDING TECHNIQUES



**Instructions:** Make a list of the self-care activities you're most craving. Write those that are daily essentials (e.g., a shower and 10-minutes of meditation), those that you need to do at least one or two times a week (e.g., engaging in a creative project or walking with a friend), and those that you'd like to do once a month (e.g., getting a massage or having a date night).

Then, take this list to your partner and other supporters and make a plan for how can get the time to say yes to these self-care activities.	you
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#### POSTPARTUM SELF CARE IDEAS

- Determine what your bare minimum
   amount of alone time is each day and
   commit to claiming that period for
   yourself. Set up a schedule with your
   partner, or other trusted loved one, to care
   for baby during that time, then just do it.
- Pre-schedule about 80% of your alone time by using your Self Care Wish List.
   Your time is made of precious drops of moments that you don't want to waste on rumination over what to do.
- Set aside regular periods of time to connect with your partner - have sex, talk about anything but your baby, make eye contact, cuddle and nap, do whatever makes you feel more connected.
- Talk to your care provider about what
  to expect from your body post-birth, and
  what the "red flags" are. If one pops us,
  don't hesitate to call your care provider.



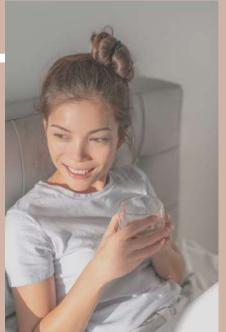








- Avoid using the Internet as your sole source of information, as you'll likely find more "worst case scenario" advice than support which pertains to your specific situation
- Allow complete nurturing of your body the
  first 40-days after birth accept all forms
  of help, sleep as often as you can, eat what
  you feel like, sit in a dark room with your
  baby and watch your favorite movie do
  what feels good to you.
- Choose three guiding words each day to clarify where to place your time. For example, "connection, movement, and creativity." (Make sure one of them encourages quality time with your newborn and self.)
- baby. Do you like to read to them? Sing to them? Stare at them? Make funny sounds at them? Explore the various ways you can bond, determining what you find enjoyable, and what you find boring. Bond the way you want to bond.









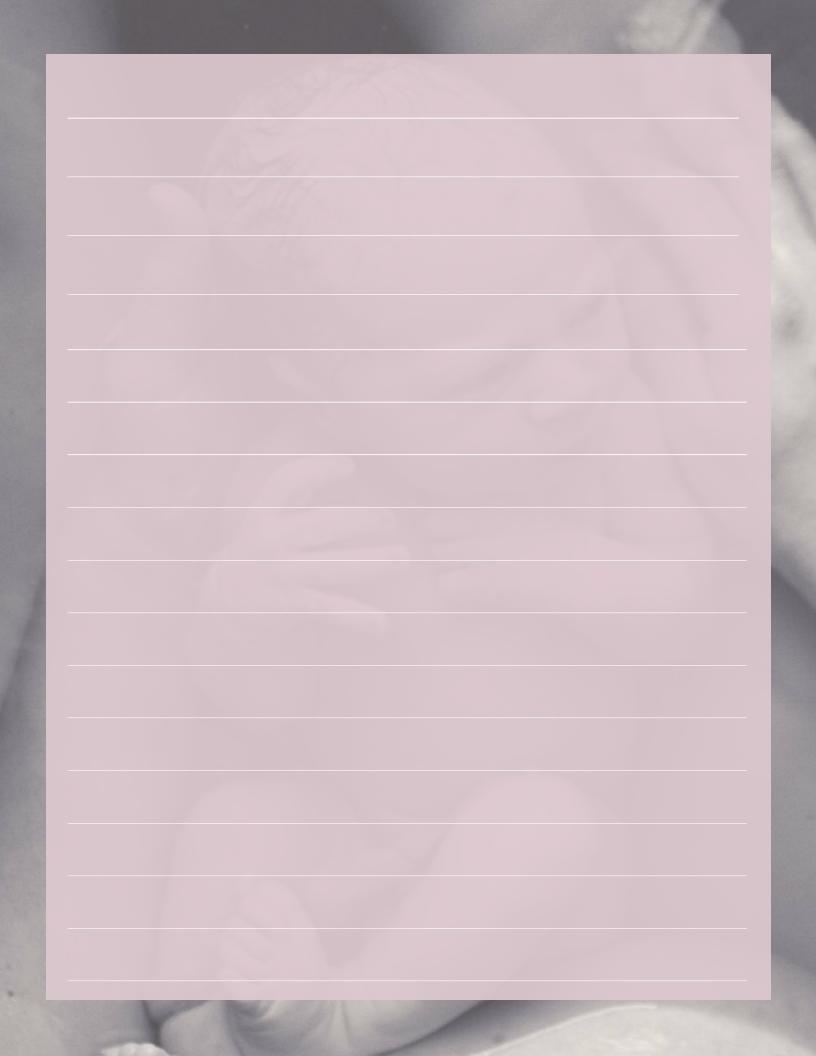


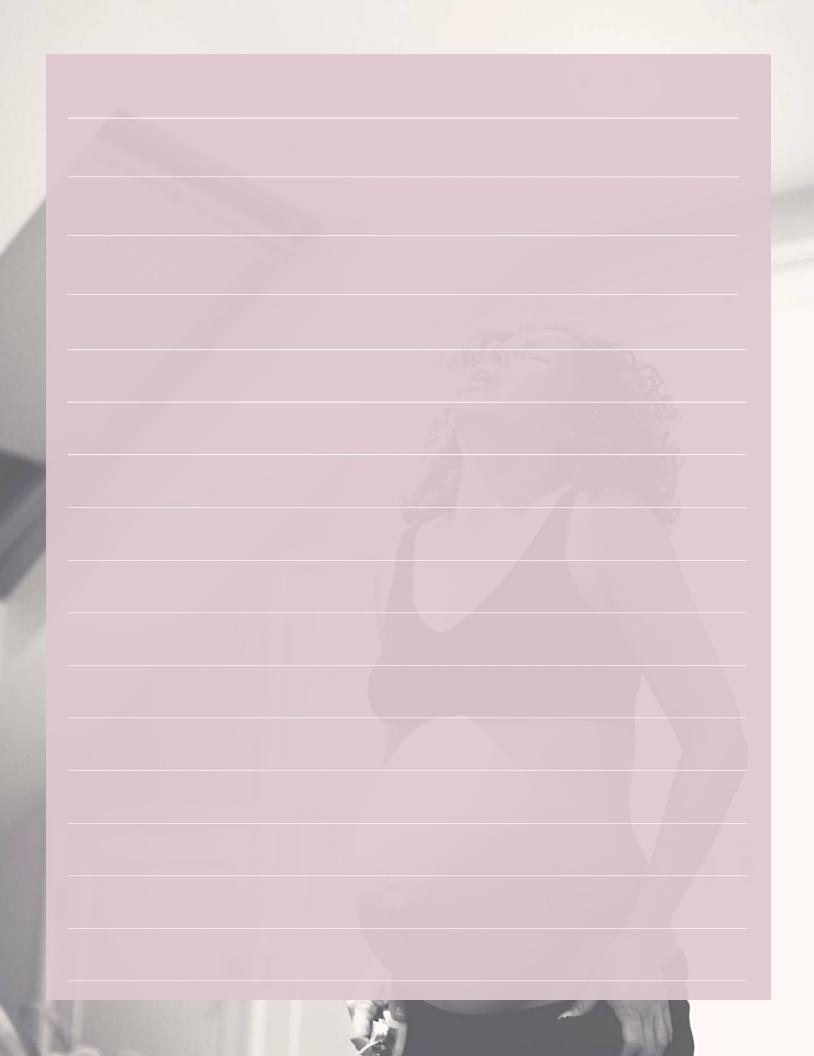
### My Birth Story



#### MY BIRTH STORY

Let it all out. Write down every nitty gritty detail of your birth, it will help you process the experience and release any eleme of the story that frustrate you. You can even write down what you wish you'd said to that pushy care provider or nosy moth in-law.	ents







#### Breastmilk Storage Guide

You can collect milk in bottles, or freezer bags specifically made for breastmilk that you can attach to your pump. I recommend the bags.

Once milk is pumped it is good for...

- 3-4 hours in a warm room
- 4-6 hours at room temperature
- 24 hours in a cooler with freezer packs
- 3-8 days in the fridge
- 6-12 months in the freezer

After baby takes a bottle of pumped milk it's not recommended to put the leftover milk back in the fridge for more than an hour, and give the same bottle to them at a later time.





To avoid having to throw out milk (aka maternal torture), use the aforementioned freezer bags to collect milk in small batches (2-5 ounces to start.) Then, give baby batches of small servings until you determine how much milk they usually require in one feeding.

Tip: Store the bags flat in your freezer so you can stack them and take up less space. Write the date the milk was pumped on the bag, and use milk from oldest to newest.



#### A Few More Things to Know About Pumped Milk

- It's normal for milk to separate into two layers while in the fridge (cream rises to the top.) Just swirl the bottle to mix it up.
- The color, consistency and smell of your milk will vary based on your diet.
- Thawed milk is good in the fridge for 24-hours, do not re-freeze it.
- To thaw frozen milk, leave it in the fridge overnight or place it in a bowl of warm (not boiling) water for 20-minutes.
- Milk is not spoiled unless it smells very bad or tastes sour.
- Never microwave milk.



### What do I most love about motherhood? What do I dislike?

#### Has my identity shifted? If so, how?

#### What kind of mother do I want to be?

#### How can I hold on to my sense of self?

## Are there any limiting thoughts or actions I can let go of?

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Feng Shui Mommy: Creating Balance and Harmony for Blissful Pregnancy,
   Childbirth, and Motherhood:
   Amazon.com/Feng-Shui-Mommy Childbirth-Motherhood/dp/1608684717
- (Online Course) Childbirth Preparation:
   A Complete Guide for Pregnant Women
   Udemy.com/course/childbirth preparation-a-complete-guide-for pregnant-women/
- Bailey Gaddis YouTube:
   Youtube.com/channel/UC1STyRbIrYgeF
   M-b4EpVryQ
- Website: YourSereneLife.com
- Blog: FengShuiMommyBlog.com/





