

BOOKLET 2

Miriam F. Acheson  
Family Birth Place  
Guide to Pregnancy  
and Birth

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**DELIVERY  
PREPARATION  
(34-36 WEEKS)**



PORT HURON

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DOING WHAT'S BEST.®

## CONGRATULATIONS!

This series of educational handouts provides you with information as you progress through your pregnancy. It will follow along with you as you go through your prenatal appointments, routine tests, labor, delivery, caring for and feeding your baby, and your baby's care with their own doctor. It is recommended that those who will care for you and your baby read this book as well.

At McLaren Port Huron you are part of a special tradition of family-centered maternity care that has been trusted for generations. The skilled physicians, nurses and other health care providers you meet at the offices and the staff at McLaren Port Huron strive to provide a safe, comfortable, first-class experience for you and your family.

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Health Care Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Newborn Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Preregistration: 810-989-3270

Miriam F. Acheson Family Birth Place: 810-989-3439

Educational Classes: 810-989-3270 / toll free 1-800-228-1484

[www.mclaren.org/phfbp](http://www.mclaren.org/phfbp)

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 02 Preparing to Deliver Your Baby
- 02 Signs Your Body is Preparing for Labor
- 03 How Will I Know if I'm in Labor?
- 03 Early Labor at Home
- 04 When to Call Your Doctor When You Think You're in Labor
- 04 Delivering at the Miriam F. Acheson Family Birth Place
- 06 During Labor and Delivery
- 08 Labor Pain Management
- 10 Assisted Delivery
- 10 Cesarean Delivery
- 12 Preparing for Your Scheduled Cesarean Delivery
- 13 Birth Wishes

## PREPARING TO DELIVER YOUR BABY

These are some suggestions for things to do before your baby arrives.

- Choose a doctor to care for your baby.
- Complete the birth wishes form on page 14/15 and discuss with your doctor at your 34-week appointment. Bring this form with you when you come to the hospital for delivery.
- Talk with friends and family about your wishes for visitors while you and your baby are in the hospital.
- Have your baby's car seat inspected and learn how to transport your baby safely and securely. Visit [seatcheck.org](http://seatcheck.org) for organizations that provide this service.
- If you have a durable power of attorney, bring a copy with you to the hospital.

## SIGNS YOUR BODY IS PREPARING FOR LABOR

You may experience some of the signs below while your body is preparing for the start of labor. If you have any questions or concerns, call your doctor.

### Lightening

Lightening, sometimes referred to as the baby "dropping", occurs when the baby's head drops down into the pelvis. This can happen a few weeks before labor begins. Some women sense when this happens; others do not.

### Mucous Plug

Thick mucous seals off the cervix during pregnancy. When the cervix starts to open, the mucous plug is released into the vagina. Some women have some minor bleeding, or "bloody show", when this happens. This also can occur weeks before labor begins.

### Bag of Water

The bag of water around the baby may break before or during labor, causing amniotic fluid to leak out. The fluid may trickle out or come out as a large gush. If you think your bag of water has broken, take note of these four things:

1. **Color:** Is the fluid clear, yellow, green or brown?
2. **Odor:** Is there any odor?
3. **Amount:** Is there a spoonful or cupful of fluid?
4. **Time:** What time did your bag of water break?

Some moms can't tell if their bag of water has broken. They might feel like some urine leaked out. If you aren't sure, wear a sanitary pad, empty your bladder and try coughing. If anything leaks out onto the pad, you can then check the color, odor and amount. Then call your doctor with the information. Also, keep track of how often you feel your baby move after you think your bag of water has broken. You'll want to wear a pad or a small towel in your panties when you go to the hospital.

### Contractions

Contractions happen when the uterus tightens and relaxes. They open the cervix and help to push the baby into the birth canal.

## HOW WILL I KNOW IF I'M IN LABOR?

Every woman feels labor differently. Some feel cramps similar to menstrual cramps; others feel backaches that come and go; still others feel heavy pressure on the top of their thighs. Listen to your body. If you feel pains or aches that come and go, time them. See if a pattern is developing.

The following table may help you decide if you are in early labor. **HINT:** True labor usually has three progressives: The contractions get closer together, last longer and get stronger.

TRUE VS. FALSE LABOR	FALSE LABOR	TRUE LABOR
Timing of contractions	Irregular; they don't get closer together as time goes on.	Come at regular intervals and get closer together. They last 30-90 seconds.
Change with movement	Contractions may stop when you walk, rest or change positions.	Contractions keep coming no matter what you do.
Strength	Contractions are weak and stay that way. An occasional strong contraction is followed by a weaker contraction.	Contractions steadily get stronger.

## EARLY LABOR AT HOME

**Early labor** (your cervix dilates from 0-6 cm)

What happens

- Mild contractions begin. They are often irregular and last between 30-60 seconds.
- Contractions gradually get closer together. Toward the end of labor they are less than 5 minutes apart.

How long it lasts

- The length of early labor varies. Most first-time moms average between 6-12 hours. For some women, it's a few hours; for others it's a day or more.



What you can do

- Go for a walk with your partner
- Take a bath or shower
- Rest and relax
- Practice relaxation techniques or meditation
- Sleep if you can

## WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR WHEN YOU THINK YOU'RE IN LABOR

If you are experiencing any of the following things, call your doctor. Your doctor may want you to come to Labor and Delivery triage to be examined.

- Contractions are regular (every 3-5 minutes) and intense enough that you have to breathe through them and it's difficult to talk, lasting 1-2 hours.
- If your water breaks, enough that you have to wear a pad.
- Bright red bleeding like a period. Spotting and mucous is normal, especially after vaginal exams.
- If you are concerned about a decrease in the amount your baby is moving. A general guideline is baby should move a minimum of 10 times in 1 hour at some point during the day (not every hour).

## DELIVERING AT THE MIRIAM F. ACHESON FAMILY BIRTH PLACE

### Pre-register

Pre-register by phone before your seventh month

- Call Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- 810-989-3270

### Birthing Rooms

- All private rooms
- Birthing bed
- Birthing balls
- Television
- Refrigerator in the room
- Phone
- Hair dryer
- Infant security
- 24-hour anesthesia coverage
- Individual room climate control
- Free WiFi
- Breast pumps and supplies are available

After delivery, we encourage you to keep baby in your room so you can help care for him/her. This will make you feel more comfortable once you are at home. Most parents say they sleep better when baby sleeps in their room. Your partner is encouraged to stay in your room with you and baby.

### Visitors

Visitors of your choosing are allowed to visit you and your baby. We ask that visitors be healthy and wash their hands before holding your baby. Short visits are encouraged, as you need this time to rest and get to know your baby.

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## DELIVERING AT THE MIRIAM F. ACHESON FAMILY BIRTH PLACE (CONT'D.)

### What to Bring to the Hospital

*Please bring any paperwork you received from your doctor's office, completed as much as possible.*

#### Labor and Delivery

Bring anything to labor and delivery that will give you comfort during labor. Leave the rest of your luggage in your car for after delivery.

#### For Laboring Mothers:

- This book
- Driver's license, military or state identification card
- Durable power of attorney, if you have one
- Robe (sometimes preferred to a hospital gown)
- Washable, comfortable slippers or skid proof socks
- Massage lotion
- Lip balm
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Your own pillow (non-white pillowcase)
- Focal point, such as a photograph
- Favorite music to listen to
- Birthing balls are provided for you

#### For Coaches:

- Comfortable clothing, extra clothing to sleep in after delivery
- Toiletries
- Cameras and chargers for electronic devices
- Any food or snacks you may like. A microwave is available for use, as well as a nourishment room stocked with sandwiches, soda, juice, coffee and tea.

#### After Delivery

These items will be left in your car until after delivery. Your coach will bring it to you. Pack your personal breast pump, if you have one.

- Bathrobe and slippers
- Toiletries, shampoo, deodorant
- Brush/comb
- Full size cotton panties
- Two well-fitted bras (nursing bras can be convenient, but not necessary)
- Pillow (non-white pillowcase)
- Comfortable, soft blanket
- Going home clothing and blanket for baby
- Infant car seat, installed and inspected



## DURING LABOR AND DELIVERY

*The following describes what you may experience during labor, options for pain management and what typically happens during birth.*

### **Breaking the Bag of Water**

Your doctor may want to break your bag of water while you are in labor. This is a painless procedure, done during a vaginal exam. The doctor inserts a small hook to break the bag lining, causing the fluid to leak out. You may feel more intense contractions as your baby's head is no longer cushioned by the bag of water.

Your doctor may want to break the bag of water:

- To see what color the fluid is
- To help strengthen contractions
- To place internal monitors

If the fluid is yellow/green or brown in color, it is called meconium fluid. This indicates your baby has had a bowel movement. Your health care team will pay close attention to your baby during labor and delivery to make sure there is none of this fluid in the baby's lungs.

### **Labor Augmentation**

During labor, you may need the help of pitocin. Pitocin is a synthetic hormone that causes the uterus to contract. Pitocin strengthens contractions or can even restart them if they are showing signs of weakening.

### **Back Labor**

Back labor is pain in the lower back that is present during each contraction, preventing you from relaxing during contractions. Often this pain is caused by baby's head rubbing on your lower spine, pelvis or tailbone. If this occurs, we say the baby is in "posterior" position. Even if baby's head is not in the posterior position, some women still experience back labor.

The following techniques can help with back labor:

- Get on your hands and knees and rock your pelvis to and fro
- Have your coach alternate warm and cold compresses on your back
- Have your coach apply pressure to your lower back during a contraction
- Use a warm shower or tub

*Continued...*

## **DURING LABOR AND DELIVERY (CONT'D.)**

### **Monitoring During Labor**

Monitors help your health care team see how your labor is progressing and how your baby is tolerating labor. If your pregnancy is non-complicated, you may only be placed on a monitor sporadically during labor.

#### *External Monitors*

These two monitors rest gently on your belly. One monitors your baby's heart rate and the other monitors when your contractions begin and end.

#### *Internal Monitors*

Not all women require internal monitors, but sometimes conditions during labor change to make placing internal monitors necessary. Internal monitoring will not hurt your baby. It is a very accurate way to measure your baby's heart rate and/or actual strength of your contractions. If internal monitors are used, external monitors will be removed. Your bag of water must be broken in order to place the monitors.

### **Intravenous Fluids (IVs)**

IVs are not always needed during labor. Some women can stay well hydrated with oral fluids. However, we do recommend a saline-lock that is not hooked up to fluids but would allow fluids to be administered quickly in the case of an emergency. If you have a cesarean delivery, epidural, request any type of pain medication, or a condition that requires close monitoring of you and your baby, you will have an IV.

### **Urinary Catheters**

A full bladder can prolong labor and prevent your baby from moving lower into your pelvis. We encourage you to void often to keep your bladder as empty as possible during labor. Occasionally, a catheter may be used to help keep mom's bladder empty during labor. A foley catheter is typically used during cesarean deliveries.

### **Labor Induction**

Most women go into labor on their own. Labor causes the uterus to contract and the cervix to soften, open and thin out. When this does not happen naturally or there is a medical need, labor will be induced. Unless there is a medical reason, labor is typically not induced before 41 weeks. There are several choices for inducing labor. Your doctor will help you choose the option that is best for you and your baby.

Your doctor may start the induction with a process called cervical ripening. Medication is either placed in the vagina or taken orally to help soften the cervix. This requires you to stay in the hospital.

At the hospital, you will sign a consent form to begin the induction. You will receive liquids through an IV, and pitocin, another induction medication, may be used. Induction may take more than 1 day, especially if this is your first baby. Occasionally delivery does not happen even though labor has been induced.



## LABOR PAIN MANAGEMENT

Pain is part of the normal process of labor. It is not a sign of anything abnormal. The management of labor pain is one of the main goals of maternity care. Your caregiver will help you cope with the pains, build your self-confidence and assure you that everything is going well. Your doctor and labor coach will offer you reassurance, guidance, encouragement and acceptance of your coping style. Our birthing rooms will help foster a sense of comfort and privacy and help you maintain activity during labor, such as walking, showering, using a birthing ball or resting.

### **Non-medicated Options**

The following non-medicated ways to manage labor pain will help you deal with physical pain as well as enhance your sense of well-being during labor. McLaren Port Huron uses many, but not all, of these techniques.

#### **Application of Heat and Cold**

Alternating hot and cold compresses is an easy and inexpensive way to help you cope with labor pains. Heat can be applied to your lower back, lower abdomen or groin. Heat can also be used to help relieve chills and decrease muscle and joint stiffness. Don't use heat if there is excessive bleeding, you have a fever, areas of your body are numb or if you have received an epidural. Cold therapy can be used on your back, chest or face during labor. Sometimes a cool washcloth will be enough. You can also use a small bag filled with ice, gel pack, hot water bottle filled with ice and water or even a frozen bag of vegetables.

#### **Aromatherapy**

Essential oils can be used to reduce anxiety, nausea and vomiting, labor pain and improve contractions. Essential oils also enhance your sense of well-being. Diffusers are not permitted.

#### **Childbirth Education**

We recommend you and your partner take a childbirth education class during pregnancy. These classes help you know what to expect and give you the knowledge to make informed decisions when it comes time to deliver your baby.

#### **Continuous Labor Support**

Your labor partner can provide support, including emotional support, reassurance, encouragement and guidance. He or she can also help with communication, advice and explanations of procedures to you while you are in labor. Having this continuous support can lead to a much more satisfying labor and delivery.

#### **Maternal Movement and Positioning**

During labor you can walk, move or change positions to be more comfortable. Your caregivers will often suggest positions that can accelerate labor progress, slow down an accelerated delivery or help with back pain, blood pressure, ineffective contractions, baby in the wrong position or baby's heart rate issues. Unless medically necessary, lying in bed is not the best way to labor. Squatting, walking, lunging and using a birthing ball help your pelvis open wider, allowing your baby to descend and help labor progress.

## LABOR PAIN MANAGEMENT (CONT'D.)

### Music and Other Sounds

Music, white noise or other sounds may decrease your perception of pain during labor. Music can also enhance relaxation, lift your spirits and give you a greater sense of control.

### Relaxation and Breathing

The use of breathing and relaxation techniques is helpful during labor. They may contribute more to your ability to cope with the pain rather than reduce the pain.

### Touch and Massage

Touch and massage is a great way to reduce pain during labor. They also convey positive feelings of well-being, care, concern and love, and enhance health and healing. Your labor partner should be taught appropriate massage techniques to use during labor.

### Water Therapy

Water therapy can be relaxing, providing warmth and pain relief. Immersion in warm water deep enough to cover the abdomen or using the shower to enhance relaxation can reduce labor pain and promote labor progress.

In conclusion, these non-medicated techniques:

- Are comparable to using narcotics during labor
- Have few side effects and require few safety precautions
- Can be used together or one right after another to increase their total effect
- Can be used instead of or in addition to pain relief medications
- Are inexpensive and easy to use
- Tend to be rated high in satisfaction and used in future labors

Using these non-medicated techniques makes you an active participant in your labor, choosing your own self-comfort measures and using your own capabilities and support team to follow through.

### Medication Options

There are different types of pain medications you can use during labor. You may choose either one type or a combination to manage your pain.

- **Epidural** – This pain medication is given through a tiny catheter (tube) that is placed in your back by an anesthesiologist. It is given throughout labor until after the delivery of your baby. An epidural is a very effective way to relieve your pain, and risks are very rare with an epidural. The anesthesiologist will review the risks with you before your epidural is placed.
- **Opioid Pain Medication** – These are strong pain relievers that help reduce pain, anxiety and tension during early labor. Stadol is the most commonly used medication in labor.

## ASSISTED DELIVERY

### Episiotomy

An episiotomy is a surgical incision that is made between the opening of the birth canal (vagina) and the anus (rectum) to allow more room for the baby's head at the time of delivery. Your doctor will not know if you need an episiotomy until close to time of delivery. It is not routinely used.

Perineal tears are very common and are repaired using dissolvable stitches. The area will be numbed before the stitches are placed to ensure you are as comfortable as possible. If you had an epidural, this may also numb the pain of the stitches.

### Vacuum Extractor

A vacuum extractor has a suction cup that is gently placed on the baby's head. When mom pushes during delivery, the doctor will gently apply pressure to the suction cup to help deliver the baby's head quickly and gently. It is not routinely used. Your doctor will decide if the vacuum extractor is needed.

A vacuum extractor is used because:

- Mom is exhausted
- Baby is in the posterior position in mom's pelvis
- Baby is in distress, but low enough in the birth canal for the vacuum extractor to be used to deliver baby quickly

After an assisted delivery your baby may have some bruises or marks on his/her head from the placement of the vacuum extractor. These marks will usually disappear in a few days.

## CESAREAN DELIVERY

In a cesarean birth, an incision is made in the abdomen through which the baby is delivered. Cesareans are used when a vaginal delivery is not possible. Some of the reasons for a cesarean delivery include:

- Baby's head is too large for mom's pelvis
- Baby is not tolerating labor well and may be stressed
- Baby is breech, or not aligned correctly, in mom's pelvis
- The placenta is covering the opening to the birth canal (placenta previa)
- Umbilical cord is in the way of the birth canal
- Baby is premature
- Twins or triplets

Mom may also have some health concerns that make a cesarean delivery safer for her health, including:

- A heart condition
- Poorly controlled diabetes
- Hypertension during pregnancy (toxemia)
- Labor doesn't progress
- Had a previous cesarean delivery

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## CESAREAN DELIVERY (CONT'D.)

If you will be delivering your baby by cesarean, your doctor and nurse will provide you with all the information you need to be ready. An anesthesiologist will talk with you about your anesthesia options. These usually include an epidural or spinal anesthesia. In emergent circumstances, general anesthesia may be used.

The following steps may also take place to prepare you for cesarean delivery:

- An IV will be placed.
- You'll be given an antacid.
- Your abdomen will be shaved around the incision area.
- Your support person will be given scrubs, mask and a hat and will wait outside the cesarean room while it is prepared. Then your support person will be brought in to sit next to you. One person can be with you during surgery.
- Heart and blood pressure monitors will be placed on you.
- A foley catheter will be placed in your bladder to keep it draining during surgery. It may remain in place until the next day when you are up and walking to the bathroom on your own.
- Your abdomen will be cleaned and draped with sterile drapes.
- The surgery begins.

The actual delivery of your baby only takes a few minutes. Delivery of the placenta and completion of your surgery will take about another 45-60 minutes.

If baby is doing well, you can expect to keep him/her with you. Many moms can hold their baby skin-to-skin while still in the cesarean suite. After surgery, you, your baby and your support person will be taken to the recovery room for about two hours. While in the recovery room, you can breastfeed your baby if you want. This is a great time to bond with your baby. Your nurse will let you know when you can have visitors. They may come to see you one at a time as long as they are healthy and wash their hands before holding baby.

If your baby requires special assessment immediately, he/she will be taken to the NICU for further care. Your support person may go to the NICU with your baby. After your recovery time is over, you will be taken to see your baby.



## PREPARING FOR YOUR SCHEDULED CESAREAN DELIVERY

### Getting Ready for Surgery

- **Do not eat anything after midnight the night before your surgery** unless your doctor tells you otherwise. If you eat after midnight, your surgery may be postponed or cancelled for your safety.
- **Do not smoke the night before and the day of surgery.**
- **Do not drink coffee, milk, juice or pop, or have hard candy or chewing gum.**
- **You may brush your teeth or rinse your mouth**, but do not swallow any liquid, unless directed, within 6 hours of your surgery.
- **Check with your doctor about any daily medications you normally take.**
- **For your safety, remove the following before surgery:**
  - All metal jewelry, tongue rings and any piercings
  - Contact lenses
  - Dentures or any removable dental work
  - Hair clips or pins
  - Wigs

### What to Bring With You

- Forms your doctor provided to you
- Signed operative consent form
- Driver's license, military or state identification card
- Durable power of attorney, living will or both

### Use of Cameras in the Operating Room

You are permitted to bring a hand-held camera or video equipment to take photos or videos of your baby. However, we ask that you wait until the initial evaluation of your baby is complete and the baby care nurse or pediatrician gives approval. You will need permission from all medical personnel in attendance before including them in your photos or videos. No medical or obstetrical emergencies, anesthesia or neonatal procedures may be recorded.

### Family and Friends

One person may be in surgery with you. They will be seated at your head after you have been given your anesthesia and the surgery is beginning. Other visitors can wait in the Acheson Family Birth Place waiting area or wait for your call at home. Your partner can let them know when you are done and when they can come to visit. Visitors are limited to two in the recovery room. You will be in recovery for about two hours after the birth of your baby.

## **BIRTH WISHES**

Birth plans allow you to express your wishes for an ideal birth experience. McLaren Port Huron welcomes your thoughts and ideas on how we can achieve this together. We all share the main goal of having a healthy mom and baby. This document supports positive communication and trust between you and your obstetric care team. We encourage you to discuss your birth wishes with your doctor at your 34-36 week appointment.

We make every effort to see each family as unique as they experience labor and delivery. However, please know we are bound by hospital and national guidelines which have been developed for the safety of you and your baby. During labor, your doctor will talk with you about the benefits, risks and alternatives of the decisions you may face. We encourage you to voice your priorities and preferences during your hospital stay. We want to know how we can help you feel confident and relaxed during this important time.



## BIRTH WISHES FORM

Are you planning to take any classes during your pregnancy?  Yes  No

If yes, check all that apply:

- Breastfeeding 101       Comfort & Relaxation During the Birthing Process  
 Saturday Express       Online Childbirth Education       Family Birth Place Tour

### Hospital Arrival/Admission

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated due date \_\_\_\_\_

Support people (limited to 4) \_\_\_\_\_

### Pain Relief During Labor

What are your plans for pain relief during labor? (check all that apply)

- Natural/unmedicated childbirth. You also may be able to utilize relaxation and breathing techniques, massage, shower, birthing ball, etc.  
 Use of IV pain medication, such as morphine  
 Epidural  
 Unsure at this time

### Delivery

During delivery we will encourage you to push when you have an urge and do what feels most natural to you. We may make suggestions to help you.

**What we DO at delivery:** Immediate skin-to-skin for at least the first 60 minutes of life or until the first feeding; delayed cord clamping; stem cell cord blood collection (if desired).

**What we DON'T routinely do at delivery:** Enemas; shaving for a vaginal birth; episiotomies.

I would like \_\_\_\_\_ to cut my baby's umbilical cord.

### Cesarean Delivery Preferences

Our goal is always for a healthy, normal vaginal birth. If cesarean birth becomes necessary, we will continue to consider your preferences as much as possible. Sometimes emergency situations necessitate a fast conversation about the risks and benefits of cesarean birth. We encourage your active participation in this discussion. We strive to keep your family together even when a cesarean delivery is required.

- Support person to stay with me, if possible (Name \_\_\_\_\_)  
 Skin-to-skin in the operating room if mom and baby are both doing well  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

*Continued on back of page...*

# BIRTH WISHES FORM

## Postpartum Preferences

Who is your pediatrician? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your plans for feeding your baby? \_\_\_\_\_

If you are having a boy, do you plan on circumcision?  Yes  No

There are two (2) matching identification bracelets that match those that your baby will wear. One will be placed on your wrist after delivery.

Please identify another adult you would like to wear the second bracelet: \_\_\_\_\_

Rooming in with your baby is the norm at McLaren Port Huron. Keeping you and your baby together has many benefits for both you and your baby. Except in special circumstances, newborn tests and assessments will be done at the bedside.

We encourage you to consider one (1) additional support person to stay with you and your partner/labor support person at night. This is when most parents find that they could use the extra help in the hospital.

Will someone be staying in your room with you?  Yes  No

If so, name/relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

## Special Requests

Please list any religious, cultural, dietary and/or personal preferences or concerns pertinent to your labor, birth, postpartum stay or to the care of your baby. We want to know what is important to you.

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I have shared my birth wishes with my doctor and we both understand it. We will work together toward a healthy and satisfying birth experience. I understand my preferences may not be followed just as written and may need to change if a medical need arises in order to ensure a safe and healthy birth for my baby and me.

My signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Labor & Delivery RN signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

TEAR OR CUT PAGE OUT









PORT HURON

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