

# Communicating with your Care Providers During Birth



Whether you are giving birth at home, in a Birth Centre or Hospital, working with an OB or Midwives, good communication with your care providers plays a vital role in your birth experience.

## Education

Spend time learning about birth and all of the options available to you in your birth setting. Take a prenatal class (preferably through an independent childbirth educator), consider hiring a doula, read books, connect with other families who have had positive birth experiences. Use social media as a source for information mindfully.

**Knowledge truly is power.**

## Preparation

Spend time working through your fears and identify possible triggers during birth. Develop strategies for coping and establish boundaries with these in mind. Lean on your support people. Discuss how they will help advocate for you if/when you are unable to. The intensity of labour often makes it difficult to focus, have important conversations and make decisions.

**Do the work ahead of time as much as possible.**

## Mutual Respect

During birth, especially in a hospital, setting you can expect to encounter many different care providers who will be with you for varying amounts of time. While emotions can run high (on all sides) it is important to approach every interaction respectfully but while still maintaining your boundaries. Be mindful of coming on too strong but also equally mindful of "people pleasing".

**Your relationship with these providers is short term but your birth experience will remain with you for life.**

## Use your B.R.A.I.N

Questions to ask when your care provider makes a recommendation that deviates from your preferences:

What are the **B**enefits?

What are the **R**isks?

What are the **A**lternatives?

As yourself, what is my **I**ntuition telling me?

What if we do **N**othing?

One of the best strategies in labour is asking for space and time.

## Understand Your Rights

You ALWAYS have the right to decline any test, procedure or recommendation from ANY care provider.

You have a right to **informed consent**. Your care provider has an obligation to inform you of the risks and alternatives to any test or procedure they are recommending so that you can make an informed decision about your care.

You have the right to change your mind.

You have the right to feel comfortable before proceeding.

You have the right to ask questions (and ask them again if needed).