

Guidelines for Childbirth at Home

General Criteria

- Healthy physically and mentally
- Well-nourished woman
- Adequate social supports before, during and after birth
- Primary participants mature and able to accept responsibility for outcome of birth
- Commitment to maintaining a positive emotional environment for outcome of birth
- Childbirth, homebirth and breastfeeding education secured
- Preparation of persons planning to be present for the birth
- Complete records from previous provider for current and/or past pregnancies
- Pediatric care arranged by 36 weeks of pregnancy
- Arrangements made for emergency transport
- Clean home environment- supplies orderly
- Understanding there will be no intervention unless medically necessary
- Understanding there will be no use of labor pain medications in the home
- Agreement to use IV therapy/medication as medically indicated for the health of the mother and baby
- Agreement to transfer mother and/or infant to the hospital at the discretion of the attendant at any time during labor, delivery or postpartum
- Help available 24 hours a day for at least one week after the birth

Contraindications (screening done by history or exam)

- Rh incompatibility with a rise in titer
- Malnutrition, poor weight gain
- Drug or alcohol addiction
- Multiple pregnancy
- Diabetes needing medication
- Polyhydramnios or oligohydramnios
- Intrauterine growth restriction
- Marked maternal anemia at term
- Preeclampsia
- Placenta previa
- Abnormal presentation (breech, transverse)
- Primary herpes infection in labor
- Positive serology for syphilis or HIV
- Prolonged pregnancy with documented change in fetal status

Labor and Delivery Complications Requiring Hospitalization

- Fetal heart rate abnormalities
- Abnormal intrapartum bleeding
- Prolonged labor with no evidence of progress
- Cord prolapse
- Meconium stained amniotic fluid (depending on severity and stage of labor)
- Elevated maternal temperature
- Severe or persistent hemorrhage
- Retained placenta
- Newborn health status unstable
- Discretion of attendant