



The Childbirth Center At Cooley Dickinson Hospital

BIRTH IS JUST THE BEGINNING

Helpful Information for Labor Partners

The Childbirth Center at Cooley Dickinson Hospital extends a warm welcome to you !

SUPPORTING THE LABORING WOMAN

You are about to take part in a life-changing experience - the birth of your baby or the baby of a loved one. As a partner to a woman in labor, you have an important role in helping her to feel well supported throughout her labor. You know her better than anyone else. You can be her advocate with staff and also with the many family members and friends who will visit her and the new baby.

How many labor support people may attend the birth?

The birth mother may choose to have as many labor support people in the room as will comfortably fit. The number of labor partners should be discussed with the midwife or obstetrician and the labor nurse. The labor partner(s) may stay with the mother all through labor. Sometimes, when there is more than one labor partner, each one takes turns supporting the mother. There is a waiting room/solarium for additional family and friends waiting to meet the new baby.

Contagious illness

If you have a contagious illness or have been exposed to one, please tell the obstetrician or midwife before you arrive at the Childbirth Center. Some examples of contagious illnesses include: the flu, a cold with sneezing or coughing, Chicken Pox, Whooping Cough, German Measles, Tuberculosis, or herpes blister (cold sore).

Clothing

You will be wearing your own clothing throughout the labor. The temperature of the room can be controlled to suit the birth mother's needs. Plan to dress in layers to adjust for room temperature. The mother may choose to shower or to take a bath during her labor. She will still want you to be nearby - and you might get wet. Pack your suitcase with a change of clothing. (Some partners have worn a bathing suit while the mother is in the shower/tub.) Wear comfortable shoes. You may be standing on your feet for a long time. Pack your own labor bag a few weeks before the due date.

Cesarean Birth

The mother may be able to have up to two labor partners with her during a cesarean birth. The obstetrician and anesthesiologist decide if one or two partners will be permitted during the surgery. The operating room is a sterile room. You will be given special clothing - "scrubs" to wear. (Please do not bring the scrubs home.) You will be given instructions for cleaning your hands. You will be given a seat by the mother's side to sit in through the surgery. If the baby is doing well after birth, the baby will be given to you to hold. The nurses can show you how to hold the baby so that mom and baby can look at each other up close, and mom can touch her baby. Sometimes, a baby needs medical attention right after a cesarean or a vaginal birth. If the nursery is the best place for the baby, you will be given the choice to stay with the mom or to go with the baby to the nursery. Once you have left the surgery, you will need to wait until the surgery is over to rejoin the mother.

Valuables

You are responsible for your own valuables. We suggest that you leave your checkbook, charge cards and money (except for a small amount) at home. Suitcases, backpacks, etc. can be brought into the birthing rooms. Please do not leave valuables in the luggage. If you are walking the halls with the mother in labor or if a cesarean birth is necessary, your valuables will be unattended.

Food

We suggest that you bring a healthy meal with you to eat during labor to keep up your energy. There is a refrigerator and a microwave for you to use. Many women are sensitive to strong odors in labor. Choose foods carefully. For example, avoid foods with onions or garlic in them. Be sure to bring a tooth brush, too. Coffee, tea, juice and soda are available to labor partners during labor. There is a cafeteria and a coffee shop at Cooley Dickinson Hospital for meals and snacks. Vending machines with snacks and cold drinks are located in the solarium and also in the cafeteria.

After the baby is born, you will receive a coupon to use in the cafeteria or coffee shop. Please feel free to purchase additional meals in the cafeteria or coffee shop or bring food from home and dine in the mother's room.

AFTER THE BABY HAS BEEN BORN....

...You (the father/mother or support person) will continue to be an important support person for the new mother and baby. We encourage families to stay together and learn about the new baby for as much of the hospital stay as possible.

Identification Bracelets

At the time of the baby's birth, you will be given a bracelet that matches the baby's. It will allow you to bring the baby back and forth to the nursery, if needed. A nurse will always check your bracelet or the birth mother's bracelet with the baby's to be sure the bracelets match. If there is more than one support person, the mother selects one person to be given an ID bracelet.

For the baby's safety, please put the baby in the rolling crib whenever you are walking with the baby in the halls.

Staying overnight

All of the postpartum rooms are private and are equipped with a place for you to sleep. Some of the rooms have a double bed for you and your partner to share. Other rooms have a padded chair, which opens up to a bed. We want you to stay overnight so that you can learn about your new baby. Feel free to use the bathroom - including the shower, which is located in each postpartum room. Please be sure to sleep in clothing during the night as a courtesy to the staff that will be checking on the mother and baby throughout the night.

If you need to go home to be with your older children or to feed the pets, you may come back to the hospital at any time of day or night. If you return to the hospital after 8:00 p.m. and before 6:00 a.m., you will need to use the Emergency Room entrance. Your ID bracelet will allow security to let you in after hours. Do not take your ID bracelet off until mother and baby have gone home.

You are important

We appreciate the support, comfort and help that you bring to the birth mother during this wonderful event. There is no person more important to her well-being than you. We also want to help you get off to a good start with the baby being born into your lives. We look forward to meeting and working with you.

Questions

Please feel free to call the Parent Education Program for more information about the Childbirth Center or about our classes for expectant families: 413-582-2736.