



Which birth location is the best for you?

There are three main places where most births take place today; at home, at a birth center, or in a hospital. Read through each category below and take note of which birth environment you would prefer based on the details in each scenario. At the end, total up your results and see which environment you chose most often. Then, discuss these results with your spouse and pray about it with the Lord. Ask Him for guidance and peace as you come to a decision about which birth location is best for you.

1. What type of birth do I wish to have?

Location will certainly be impacted by the type of birth you wish to have. Water births would be included in the natural births category.

A. I want a completely natural, intervention free birth where I call all of the shots no matter what.

B. I want a natural, un-medicalized birth, but am willing to cooperate with birth center policies.

C. I want a medicalized birth where I plan on receiving pain medication during my labor.

2. Which provider do I need/prefer?

Certain birth providers only operate in certain birth environments. For example, generally speaking, OB/GYN's only deliver at the hospital, where as midwives can deliver at the hospital, birth center, or home, depending on the area that you live in. OB/GYN's specialize in surgery, and what to do when birth plans change and how to intervene. Because the majority of women are with OB's, they have a lot of patients and less time for each one. You will usually spend more time in the waiting room than you will with them. Midwives specialize in physiological, vaginal birth, and follow the midwifery model of care, giving more time to their patients during prenatal visits to answer questions and discuss concerns, as well as being more present during the labor process.

A. I'd prefer a midwife who's not tied down to corporate policies, works independently, and will come to my home for appointments.

B. I'd prefer a midwife who works in a group of midwives in an office setting, but still encourages natural, physiological births.

C. I'd prefer an OB/GYN who is well versed in birth interventions and works for a large practice where I'd rotate through several doctors throughout my pregnancy.

3. How far am I willing to travel for my birth?

Most people live relatively close to a hospital that can deliver their baby and some even live close to a birth center, however, since birth centers are fewer and further between, many women often have to travel further to get to one.

A. I do not want to travel for my birth at all. Car-tractions (contractions in the car) are NO fun and I'd prefer not to experience them.

B. I'm willing to travel an hour or more for my ideal birth location, the distance doesn't matter to me as much as the destination.

C. I don't mind traveling a short distance to deliver my baby, but I don't want to have to travel too far.

4. Do I want to use insurance for the cost of my birth?

Most hospitals and birth centers take most major health insurances, and most hospitals and some birth centers also take Medicaid. Birth Centers sometimes can vary in their coverage

based on the demand in their specific area. Home birth coverage varies from state to state and person to person.

A. Insurance is a non-issue for me. I either don't have it or don't plan on using it, but will if it will prove to be financially beneficial.

B. I have health insurance and/or Medicaid and would like to use it for my birth.

C. I have health insurance and/or Medicaid and will have to use it for my birth.

5. How much money do I plan on spending for this birth when all is said and done?

Hospitals are by far the most expensive places to give birth, even with insurance. Because you stay there longer, they have more interventions, and require more tests due to policies, there's a lot more to cover. Birth Centers are much more affordable than hospitals, although insurance coverage varies, you typically won't get a surprise bill in the mail a few months down the road like you would from a hospital as they require full payment before the birth. Home births typically don't take insurance (but can!) and are mostly paid out of pocket and up front, but again, are still less expensive than hospital births.

A. I am willing to pay out of pocket and up front for my birth, even if it's in installments.

B. I am willing to pay up front for my birth, but plan on using Medicaid or some other health insurance to help cover some of the cost.

C. I would like to wait to pay for my birth until a few months afterward, and plan on using either Medicaid or some other health insurance to help cover the cost.

6. What environment do I feel most relaxed and at ease delivering in?

Different people feel differently in different environments and you'll want to keep that in mind as you are deciding on a place to give birth.

A. I feel most relaxed at home, in my space, in my place.

B. I feel most relaxed in a place that looks like home, but isn't necessarily mine.

C. I feel most relaxed in a hospital room.

7. What environment do I feel safest delivering in?

Again, different people feel differently in different environments and you'll want to continue to keep that in mind as you are deciding on a place to give birth.

A. I feel safest in my home, with my midwife and her team with me.

B. I feel safest in a place that looks more like a bedroom, but where I know I'll have a midwife team close by.

C. I feel safest in a hospital, surrounded by every intervention that I could possibly want or need.

8. Who do I want to attend my birth?

Different environments definitely have different policies when it comes to who can attend births. From the providers, to the support people, it varies from place to place.

A. I want to call the shots when it comes to who attends my birth. I want to know exactly which midwife I'll have, and be able to have anybody else I want including family, friends, a doula, birth photographer, and whoever else I feel like inviting into that space. I do NOT want any strangers I've never met before in my birth space.

B. I want my nearest and dearest by my sides, as well as maybe a doula, and possibly a birth photographer. I want to have met the midwife who will attend my birth and the nurses ahead of time.

C. I only want my spouse, and maybe one other person in the room. It doesn't matter to me that I may have never met the provider who will deliver my baby, and that many different hospital staff will be in and out of my birth.

9. How long do I want to stay at my birth location after I have delivered?

Different locations have different lengths of stay postpartum, so you'll want to keep that in mind.

A. I don't want to have to get up and go anywhere after I have a baby, I just prefer to rest in my space for as long as I'd like.

B. I don't want to stay long, I want to be able to go home as quickly as possible after the birth, maybe a few hours.

C. I would like to stay for a couple of days after birth before heading home.

10. What kind of policies do I want to have to adhere to postpartum?

Each location has its own policies (or lack thereof) when it comes to your immediate postpartum, keep those in mind as you're choosing a place to birth as those first few days postpartum can impact your experience just as much as your labor.

A. I don't want any certain policies placed on me. I want to be able to sleep with my baby, in my bed whenever I'd like, without being interrupted or disturbed.

B. I'm fine following a few postpartum policies in my immediate recovery but would like to leave soon thereafter to do things my way at home.

C. I don't mind being constantly interrupted by nurses my first 48 hours of being a mom, 5am blood draws, and not being able to sleep with my baby in my bed. I'm fine to adhere to whatever policies the powers at be may have.

Now total up the number of **A's**, **B's**, and **C's** you chose.

If you chose mostly **A's**, a **home birth** sounds like the best birth for you. Research different home birth midwives in your area and interview them to get more of your questions answered.

If you chose mostly **B's**, a **birth center** sounds like the place you need to be. See how far away you live from one and what insurances they take. Take a tour, and interview their midwives to see if it indeed feels like the best fit for you.

If you chose mostly **C's**, a **hospital birth** is probably where you'll end up. Tour your local hospital's labor and delivery unit, as well as their mother and baby area, and get all of your questions answered by somebody on their staff. They'll be able to recommend a local provider who delivers at the hospital.

If you had a variety of answers with no clear winner, I encourage you to do all of the above. Get as much information as you can about each place and providers and see if you are being pulled in one direction or another.

Discuss with your spouse in detail all of what your'e thinking, you're needing and desiring. Go to the Lord in prayer together and ask for His peace on where you should plan to deliver your baby.

If you still have questions, and would like even more help in the assistance of choosing a birth place from a birth professional who has had a baby in each of these environments, please [click here](#) to schedule a consultation with me, and I'd be happy to assist you further with that and any other questions you may have.



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