



# Questions to Ask My Provider

*Built from years of sitting beside families in birth rooms, this guide reflects what we've learned about what questions actually matter when choosing your provider and birth team. This is one of the most intimate decisions of your pregnancy. You deserve care that honors your body, your intuition and your voice.*

## How to Use This Guide:

- You don't need to ask every question at once
- Notice body language as much as answers
- Alignment matters more than credentials; remember that you are not interviewing to be chosen, you are choosing
- Notice how you feel when you leave the room (use red/green flags chart below)
- You are allowed to switch providers at any point

## Philosophy and Alignment

*These questions help you understand how your provider thinks (not just what they do).*

- What is your general philosophy on prenatal, labor, birth and postpartum care?
- What are your most important values as a provider?
- How do you uphold these values in everyday practice?
- Are you supportive of physiological, low-intervention birth?
- How do you approach shared decision-making if I decline a recommendation? Will I have time to consider non-emergent decisions?
- How do you present risks, benefits, and alternatives?
- Do you work cohesively with doulas?
- How do you collaborate with nurses and hospital staff?

## Practice Structure & Accessibility

*It's important to know who will actually be walking this journey with you.*

- How many patients do you take on per month?
- Will I see you at most of my prenatal visits?
- Do you work within a group practice? If so, how many providers are there?
- Do you have a Physician's Assistant (PA) I will see regularly instead of you?
- What percentage of your patients' births do you personally attend?
- At which hospital(s) do you attend births?
- Are you reachable during emergencies? What is the best way to contact you?

## Pregnancy Care & Prenatal Approach

*Understanding what is routine, flexible and optional builds your confidence.*

- How many ultrasounds do you require in an uncomplicated pregnancy?
- What prenatal tests are standard in your practice?
- Am I able to explore alternative testing options (e.g., Fresh Test for glucose, retesting for GBS)?
- Are you supportive of my declining cervical exams at full term?
- What is your stance on nutrition and exercise during pregnancy?
- Do you support or refer to holistic therapies (chiropractic, acupuncture, herbal support)?
- Are you supportive of my partner being involved during prenatal visits?
- Will you review my birth preferences with me in detail and respect my choices around interventions without pressure?

## High-Risk & Transfer Scenarios

- How do you define or classify "high risk"?
- If my pregnancy becomes high-risk, how does that change management?
- How do you approach risk discussions—do you present absolute or relative risk?
- If I am planning an out-of-hospital birth, what are your transfer protocols?

## Labor & Birth Philosophy + Clinical Outcomes

*This section reveals how your provider approaches birth in real time.*

- Do you actively encourage your patients to hire a doula? If so, how do you collaborate?
- What is your induction rate, and at what point do you recommend induction?
- What are your induction protocols and do you support a more gradual induction?
- Do you support low-risk mothers carrying to 42 weeks?
- What is your cesarean rate? How does it compare to the national average and your hospital's rate?
- Are you supportive of VBAC (if applicable)? What is your VBAC success rate?
- What percentage of your patients have unplanned cesareans or NICU admissions?

## Labor Management & Hospital Practices

- When do you typically join labor?
- What is your role during labor and delivery?
- Will you allow labor to unfold physiologically, or do you actively manage progress?
- In your experience, what tends to cause birth to deviate from physiology?
- How do you communicate options during labor? Will I be part of discussions if circumstances change?
- Do you use evidence-based guidelines when recommending interventions?
- How do you approach decision-making if complications arise? Will I be part of the discussion?
- What are your views on:
  - Continuous fetal monitoring?
  - Routine IV placement?
  - Artificial rupture of membranes?
  - Episiotomies?
- Do you recommend eating and drinking during labor?
- What comfort measures are available at the hospital? (Tub, shower, birth ball, peanut ball, nitrous oxide, epidural, etc.)
- Do you support alternative pushing positions (not on my back)?
- Do you support spontaneous pushing (following the urge rather than directed pushing)?
- If I choose an epidural, will you still support movement and alternative pushing positions?
- Are you supportive of my partner's involvement during birth?

## Cesarean & Emergency Scenarios

*Even empowered birth preferences should include flexibility.*

- If a cesarean becomes necessary, can it be a family-centered cesarean? Can my doula be present?
- Will you honor my preferences (delayed cord clamping, immediate skin-to-skin, music, photos, etc.) when possible?
- What is your protocol for postpartum hemorrhage?
- How do you communicate during urgent situations?

## Immediate Postpartum & Follow-Up

*The birth is not the end; it's the beginning.*

- What are your standard procedures immediately after birth?
- How long do you stay with me after delivery?
- Will you support:
  - Delayed cord clamping until no longer pulsing
  - Golden hour(s)
  - Physiological (natural) placental delivery
- Does my baby stay with me unless medically necessary?
- What do postpartum visits include?
- How many postpartum visits are standard?
- Can I schedule additional visits if needed?

## Questions to Ask Yourself & Reflections

- Did I feel respected and heard?
- Could I be my most vulnerable self with them?
- Was I empowered or subtly pressured?
- Did they take time with me to answer all my questions comfortably?
- Do I trust their expertise and judgment?
- Do we genuinely “click”?
- What did my intuition say when I left?

I remember that my provider works for me-not the other way around.

Red Flags	Green Flags
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Always late and not valuing my time</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Annoyed about answering extensive questions</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Never having face time and repeatedly sending their PA</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Belittling my preferences and desires</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses the phrase “policy” without explaining medical reasoning</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Policies are presented as non-negotiable with no room for my voice</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses fear-based language to sway decisions</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Dismisses questions and says “we’ll get to that later”</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Dismisses or makes jokes about doulas/midwives/holistic practices</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Speaks over me or dismisses my voice</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> I feel discarded and generally icky when I leave</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Sits patiently and happily answers my questions to make me feel more at ease</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Reviews my birth preferences with me in detail and supports my preferences</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Asks questions about my personal life and shows a genuine interest in me</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Cares about my birth and postpartum values</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses evidence-based information to inform recommendations</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Says things like “let’s look at the evidence together” and “you don’t have to decide right now”</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourages me to trust my intuition and offers balanced guidance</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Respects my need for time to make decisions</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastically supports and respects having a doula present</li></ul>

*Still figuring out your birth team? A doula can be the missing piece that brings everything together with continuity, advocacy and someone in your corner no matter what. We'd love to connect! → [soulshinebirth.com](https://soulshinebirth.com)*