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Guidelines for Childbirth at Home

General Criteria

- Is in good physical and mental health
- Has good nutritional status
- Has adequate social supports before, during and after birth
- Is socially mature and able to accept responsibility for birth outcome
- Has a positive emotional environment
- Has access to childbirth, home birth, and breastfeeding education (books, classes)
- Is committed to breastfeeding through the postpartum period
- Has access to complete records from other provider(s) for current, and if indicated, previous pregnancies
- Makes arrangements for pediatric care prior to 36 weeks of pregnancy
- Has access to emergency transportation
- Has a clean home and birthing room, with electricity, running water and a working telephone
- Understands that technological intervention is used only when necessary
- Understands that pain medication will not be used during labor
- Agrees to use oxytocin (postpartum) when needed for health of the mother
- Agrees to transfer to the hospital during labor, birth or postpartum, if necessary
- Has help available in home 24 hrs/day for at least 1 week after the birth

Prenatal Complications Requiring Hospital Birth

List includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Previous C-section or other uterine surgery
- Rh sensitization
- Placenta previa at term
- Chronic high blood pressure requiring management with medication
- Sickle cell disease
- Significant heart, kidney or lung disease
- Preeclampsia
- Prematurity (baby less than 36 weeks of age)
- Postmaturity (baby over 42 weeks of age)
- Twins or other multiple pregnancy
- Marked maternal anemia at term
- Growth-restricted fetus
- Known suspected major fetal anomaly
- Any problem that would be better managed in the hospital

Labor and Delivery Complications Requiring Hospitalization:

List includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Abnormal bleeding during labor
- Infection at the time of labor or birth
- Active genital herpes lesion during labor
- Abnormal presentation (breech, transverse)
- Cord prolapse
- Fetal distress
- Prolonged labor without evidence of progress and/or with maternal exhaustion
- Severe or persistent postpartum hemorrhage
- Severe lacerations
- Retained placenta
- Newborn health status unstable
- Any problem that would be better managed in the hospital

Complications That May Indicate Hospital Birth:

List includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Malnutrition, poor weight gain
- Smoking cigarettes
- Heavy drug or alcohol use
- Meconium stained amniotic fluid (depending on severity and stage of labor)
- Gestational diabetes