



**Willow Buckley**  
BALANCING YOUR HEALTH

Dear Mama,

You're going to do great! You're made for this!

With Love,

~Willow

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How to use this document:

The links aren't working so well as clickable links. But if you copy the link and paste it into the browser it will take you there. I am trying to update this. Thanks for your patience.

# WHAT TO DO TO PREPARE PRENATALLY:

## 1- Hire a Doula

- a. Even if the doula can't be by your side physically your she will be available virtually helping you prepare for this birth and most importantly, being on call for you around your estimated due date.
- b. Your doula will help you determine if the 'signs' you're experiencing are in fact labor or if it's time to go back to sleep.
- c. Your doula will help you stay home longer by suggesting comfort measures and techniques that you and your partner can do together before you leave for the hospital.
- d. Your doula will help guide you while you're at the hospital with positions, positive assurance and verbal support and much more.
- e. All of these things help you start off on the best trajectory possible for the most beautiful birth possible.
- f. Doulas help create space- mental, emotional and physical space, so that a mother can birth her baby.

## 2- Spinning Babies

- a. Go to this website <https://spinningbabies.com/> and find a local parent educator <https://spinningbabies.com/spinning-babies-certified-parent-educator-directory/> or buy the Daily Essentials found <https://spinningbabies.com/start/in-pregnancy/daily-activities/>
- b. Spinning babies is an amazing wealth of knowledge to help get your baby in the most optimal position before labor begins so that your labor and birth are easier...yes, I said easier! Spinning babies doesn't spin your baby literally, but it is a bunch of techniques and positions to make space. Your pelvis is suspended and the ligaments and muscles holding it in place need to be pliable to allow the pelvis to remain flexible. This flexibility let's your baby get into the position it wants to get in to. These positions can sometimes be the difference between a vaginal birth and needing a cesarean.
- c. Spinning babies parent educators can teach you and your partner how to get into certain positions before labor begins so that when it is time your doula (who hopefully has taken classes with spinning babies) can recommend a position based on information you give her or a pattern of contractions/surges she sees to help make space.
- d. Some nurses even know spinning babies now, but in case they don't, you and your partner will have pictures and familiarity with the positions you might need in labor to help your labor progress, make space for baby to descend into the birth path, or make space for baby to get into an easier position to come out.

### 3- Online Birth Class

- a. If you haven't already taken one. There are many floating around right now. Some great ones are:
  - i. BEC, Birth Education Center Live Classes  
<https://www.birtheducationcenter.com/>
  - ii. Cap Wellness [HERE](#) Live Classes
  - iii. Kelly Pappas Beautiful One Midwifery  
<http://beautifulonebirthservices.com/essentials-for-childbirth> Prerecorded
  - iv. Sumer Jimenez - Private live classes [thesacredfemale@gmail.com](mailto:thesacredfemale@gmail.com)
  - v. Contact me, [willow@balancingyourhealth.com](mailto:willow@balancingyourhealth.com) for private education/preparation support

### 4- Chiropractic Care

- a. See a chiropractor. Your pelvis will thank you. Some of us are moving less or differently due to being quarantined. Over time this can effect your pelvis a lot, your neck and your spine. If you are local:
  - i. Dr Jay is my favorite local Chiro and is seeing clients.
  - ii. If you are not in San Diego I'm sure he has recommendations for someone near you if you aren't in North County San Diego.

### 5- Eat well. Walk 2 miles a day. Dance.

- a. Nutrition is a key component of staying healthy, having good energy and both of these help you move into labor with better strength and into an easier and more vibrant postpartum period. This includes proper supplementation/vitamins.
- b. Walking. This is the best for your hip flexors, helping getting babies head in the 'down' position, and great for you cardiovascular system.
- c. Dance because moving your body to music gets you connected to your body. Music fires off all those good mood elevators like serotonin and dopamine. Overall it can help you relax, elevate your mood and energize you. Plus babies like rhythmic movements.

### 6- Get an exercise ball.

- a. Your hips should always be just above your knees when sitting on it. This will help determine the size or how inflated it needs to be.
- b. Use it while eating dinner, sitting at your desk, or watching a show.
- c. You can't slouch when sitting on one. So it's a great way to keep that pelvis open.

# WHAT TO HAVE AT HOME:

## 1. Food for Labor

- a. Oatmeal, sweet potatoes, avocados, bone broth, soup, eggs, nut butters, toast, protein shake, anything that is easy to digest and not acidic. You don't want to eat something you wouldn't want to throw up later. IE- avoid marinara and tomato based foods. Avoid empty calories or hard to digest foods- salads without protein, sugar foods, empty carbs like chips. Think high protein and high fat.
- b. Bone Broth- heat it up, add a scoop of collagen, a tbsp. of ghee and some salt. Take this with you to the hospital. You now have a 'clear liquid' that has protein (from the collagen and bone broth itself) and fat (ghee) that tastes good, is easy to consume and will keep you going. Store/take it in a Hydroflask type bottle so it stays hot.

## 2. Water bottle

- a. Have one large enough so you can gauge how much you're drinking. Hydration is key. Too many women arrive at the hospital dehydrated. You want to drink at least 20 oz every hour and if you're waters have released/broken you'll want to be urinating every hour. Always consult your Dr about what to do if you're water has broken.

Remember TACO

T-Time  
A-Amount  
C- Color  
O-Odor

- b. Use an electrolyte powder or electrolyte drink to keep your electrolytes up: Locals: GoodOnYa makes a great one. Non locals: Ultima Electrolyte Powder or coconut water.

## 3. Exercise Ball

- a. Laboring with an exercise ball is like laboring with whole other support partner. There are SO many positions you can get into with an exercise ball. Spinning babies website has a lot and your doula can also help guide you on the many ways you can use it in labor.

## 4. Depends

- a. If your water breaks or you're losing a lot of mucus plug while in labor a pad is going to be annoying. Invest now in a box of depends and what you have left over from labor will be your best friend for postpartum bleeding. Even if you're just bleeding a little bit you'll be able to sit up more easily to nurse your baby without worrying about a shifting pad and bleeding all over your bed sheets. New moms don't have time to change the sheets ;)

## 5. Wash Cloths and Ice

- a. Wash cloths and a bowl for ice water. When labor is moving along and you're working hard you can get very hot. A cold wash cloth on your face or neck can be a game changer of comfort and relief.

## 6. Music

- a. Download music or pay for Spotify or Pandora. You want music that helps you dance and move those hips and music that helps you sleep or relax. You don't know which you'll want or need so have access to both. Please pay the \$10 for a spotify account so you avoid getting your groove interrupted by Home Depot commercials. Haha

## 7. Bowl or bucket to throw up in.

- a. Some surges are so powerful that your body will throw up to make space. If you can't keep liquids down and are vomiting a lot you might get dehydrated. Let your care provider know because you might want to go to the hospital for some IV fluids.

## 8. Shower with Removable Showerhead

- a. When all else is lost on what to do, get in the shower. Whether labor just started or you're unsure but can't get back to sleep or if you're in labor it can be the best thing to re center and get a new baseline. A new baseline means: labor was getting intense, like really intense, so you get in the shower and the intensity lessens, allowing for labor to progress and get its next level of intensity that's needed to get baby out. When this new baseline reaches its maximum threshold, get in the shower again, and create a new baseline.

# WHAT TO TAKE TO THE HOSPITAL:

## 1. Exercise ball

- a. For all the labor positions. Many hospitals provide them. If yours does not, bring one.

## 2. Peanut Ball

- a. Again, if your hospital or birth place doesn't provide them, bring one.

## 3. Birth Plan

- a. If your doula is not present you'll want a detailed birth plan that states all the things you want/desire/wish for. The nurse can reference back to it instead of interrupting your beautiful labor flow. Plus, sometimes in the midst of labor you and your partner might forget about things like delayed cord clamping, or cord blood banking, or not wanting Pitocin after birth. If the nurse has this information before hand, the nurse will be able to tell everyone your wishes. Because we don't expect you to remember all that when you're holding your new baby for the first time 😊

## 4. Phone Charger

- a. If you have one with a long cord bring that one. If you have an external rechargeable charger, bring that. You don't want your phones to die while you are in labor. You will want the phone for pictures, to talk to your doula, and to contact your loved ones.

## 5. Snacks

- a. For yourself and your partner! Think easy to digest. Honey sticks are great for a quick sugar pick me up. Apple sauce pouches are great too, easy to eat, easy to digest. Bone broth (as mentioned above). For dad, something that will keep your partner full longer. Protein bars, nut butter sandwiches, etc. And depending on your comfort- Door Dash could still be an option

## 6. Water Bottle

- a. For you and your partner. Your nurse can get you both water but there is a long window of time where your nurse might be checking you in and doing all the things she needs to do first. If you have two full water bottles you won't worry about any lag time between arriving and quenching your thirst. Plus your partner will drink more often if they have their own water bottle. They might get dehydrated themselves otherwise. Their attention will likely be on you 😊

## 7. Change of Clothes

- a. **For the partner.** If you are in the shower and they are helping you they might get wet. It can get cold in the hospital rooms and being wet will make this ten times colder.

# ARRIVING TO THE HOSPITAL:

\*Please note. Nurses are amazing, they are your cheerleaders, your support and your connection to the hospital and your care provider. Bring them a gift, some great snacks, etc. Also know that if you don't jive with your nurse you can call for the Charge Nurse and ask for a new nurse.

1. **If you're GBS positive** let them know your GBS positive upon arrival- this will get them moving a little faster and might move you through triage ; )
2. **If your waters have broken**, let them know. This also will get them to move a little faster and possibly avoid triage.

## 3. Once you are in your labor and delivery room

- a. Tell them you want to take your placenta home. That is if you want to take it home or have it encapsulated. Put this in your birth plan too.
- b. Give them your birth plan. Have them write the newborn care details and placenta directions (if any) on the white board or board in the room. Most rooms have a board that they write details about the nurses names, moms wishes, etc

## 4. Getting on the monitors and getting checked

- a. You can get into any position you want (it's harder in the triage room because it is often small) while they monitor baby. However, if you are in a position that is easier for them to get a consistent reading of baby's heart rate you are more likely to get off the monitors more quickly.
- b. Normally I recommend NOT knowing what your 'numbers' are: dilation, station, and effacement. This is because it can take a mother from her laboring brain into her thinking brain and this can be discouraging if it isn't the number she has in her mind. BUT, if you are working with a doula remotely you can just have your partner know so they can relay the info to your doula. If you don't have a doula or access to talking with your doula or your partner have familiarized yourself with spinning babies, you might want to know these numbers or have just your partner know. You'll want to know all three not just dilation:

**DILATION**- opening of the cervix (cm 1-10)

**STATION**- where baby is in the pelvis- the depth of engagement (#'s -3,-2,-1,0,+1,+2)

**EFFACEMENT**- how thin the cervix is (%up to 100)

## 5. Getting An IV

- a. Most hospitals will also want to get your IV started right away. Especially if you're GBS positive and will be receiving antibiotics. You can still get into any position while receiving the dose of antibiotics. You will have to stay still while you get your IV port placed.
- b. Nice positions are: (nurses can help get you in these positions)  
Queens/Throne position  
Sit on the Ball  
Or stand and lean over in bed-  
If you are standing you can raise the height of the bed up so you can rest your arms and head on it

# ONCE YOU'RE SETTLED IN YOUR LABOR AND DELIVERY ROOM:

\*Ask your nurse when she has a chance if she could bring you a container of **ice** and **water** and **wash clothes**. This will be great to have available to have your partner cool you down during labor or during pushing. Ask your nurse where the heat packs are. They have instant **heat packs** that feel great on a lower back. Have her get a handful for you to use.

## SHOWERS-

- Get in the shower as much as possible. It feels amazing. Remember the baseline.
- Ask your nurse or get as many towels as you can. You'll want to put a towel down as a bathmat so you avoid slipping when you get out of the shower. The nurse might have an absorbent pad you can use as a bath mat too. Best to have at least 2-3 dry towels to dry off after you get out. Partners will need to help dry you off as you could be surging while drying off and won't be able to dry off easily.
- You can try to do as many Captain Morgans in the shower as you feel are comfortable. If they aren't comfortable do minimum of three on each side. These are leg up lunges. See spinning babies for the open pelvis lunge.

The shower is the BEST place to go when things intensify. It regulates you and gives you a new baseline from the pain/intensity

### Mantras for your partner to repeat:

- You can do anything for a minute!
- Let's do a few more and see where you're at
- My inhale dissolves the pain and I open as I exhale
- My body and baby know what to do
- I am strong

### Things for your partner to do

- Hold your hand
- Let you be strong and vulnerable
- Keep it quiet
- Hold your hand
- Feed you water
- Keep it dark (dim the lights)
- Hold your hand
- Tell you you're amazing
- Keep you feeling safe

## PUSHING

- WAIT!!!!
  - Wait until you feel the urge to push between contractions before you start pushing
  - You'll feel rectal pressure during the surge at first and then you'll continue to feel the urge to poop/rectal pressure in between surges.
  - Your body will want to push, you won't be able to not push. This is the fetal ejection reflex you want to wait for.
  - If you have an epidural you may not feel this, but you might feel rectal pressure and you will be able to use this as a sign.
  - Watch more about spinning babies and how to open the outlet. The outlet is the bottom of your pelvis. Feel confident on how to get into supportive positions.



## YOUR BABY IS HERE!!!

- Delayed cord cutting is preferred. Your placenta retains almost a 1/3 of your baby's blood while baby is being born. Then it is triggered to pump it back in to your baby once baby is out. This is called delayed cord cutting. To ensure it happens put it in your birth plan. Another way to ensure it happens is to act like you're really excited to feel it pulsing and then ask your provider if you can feel it stop pulsing.

**Epidural** Getting an epidural might be part of your tool kit. If you do have an epidural change position often and use a peanut ball. If you don't have a peanut ball then get as many pillows as you can. Reference spinning babies and change every 30-45 minutes. Don't wait for the nurse to come in and change your position, hit the button and ask her to come in and help move you. You might be hungry you might not, but that bone broth drink I mentioned earlier satisfies the request of 'clear liquids' on an epidural. Drink it ☺

**Cesarean** If you know you are getting a cesarean or end up needing one, consider a gentle or mother centered cesarean. Ask if baby can be put on your chest in the O.R. after you are sewn up. This IS an option for many hospitals and OB's, some just haven't ever done it before. Watch this video for more information. <https://youtu.be/m5ivEYQQ380>

## NEW BORN CARE

- Whatever procedures you don't want done to your baby be sure to have them in your birth plan. For example, if you want to opt out of any of the standards- Vit K, Eye Drops and Hep B you'll need to sign a paper that you're opting out.

## Breastfeeding:

There are many lactation consultants offering virtual support. One is by Anita with Sacred Season Mother Care found <https://www.sacredseasonmothercare.com/>

- Sign up and you'll have access to great videos on how to hold baby.
- [www.kellymom.com](http://www.kellymom.com) is a website that is all things breastfeeding and bottle feeding.

I hope this quick info sheet helps you have a more empowered birth! If you're looking for more support please hire a doula or schedule a one on one virtual appointment.

[www.balancingyourhealth.com](http://www.balancingyourhealth.com) willow@balancingyourhealth.com

This information is not to be used to replace the recommendations made by your care provider. Please consult with your Dr or Midwife for any questions you might have.