



# JOURNEY

## People to Meet With During Pregnancy

Many women find out they're pregnant and don't know where to start their journey of becoming a mother. The first step, if you don't already have a medical provider, is to call a birthing hospital in your area. Ask to speak with the Nurse Manager of Obstetrics (or just say "O-B" and they'll connect you). This nurse can help you find a prenatal care provider (a doctor or a midwife) that will meet with you while you are pregnant. This person can help you set up meetings with the other hospital workers that will help during your pregnancy and delivery of your child. We have made a list of people you should meet while you are pregnant. There may be other people that we don't list here. But at least find out who these people are, and what they do. That will be a great start to having a healthy pregnancy and delivery.

### ✔ OBSTETRICIAN (OB-GYN) OR MIDWIFE (or whoever will be delivering your baby)

- Ask about birth classes in your area.
- Ask about what delivery will be like, what will happen right after birth, and for information, like who can be in the birthing room with you, and whether you can room-in with your baby after delivery.
- Make sure this person knows what kind of delivery you want to have.

### ✔ ANESTHESIOLOGIST (pain management specialist)

- Talk to this person about the medications you are taking, the type of pain relief you want during Labor, and what medications you feel safe taking home with you after delivery.
- You might have to explain this person your experience with Substance Use and Addiction.

### ✔ LACTATION SPECIALIST (breastfeeding)

- Bring a list of all drugs and medications you are taking, so the lactation specialist can tell you if you will be able to breastfeed in the hospital.
- Schedule another appointment with this person for the time right after you deliver, so that you have support when you are actually trying to breastfeed!
- Ask this person for help enrolling in the *Women, Infants, and Children* (or *WIC*) program, if you aren't already en-

rolled. *WIC* can connect you to a breastfeeding peer counselor, help you get a breast pump, and provide you with education, support, and supplemental food and formula.

### ✔ NEONATOLOGIST/PEDIATRICIAN (baby doctor)

- This person can explain what happens after a baby is born, how long the baby will be kept before discharge, and what sorts of things to be on the lookout for, in case the baby experiences symptoms of substance withdrawal.
- Also ask for a tour of the nursery or place where your baby may stay after birth. It's a good idea to start getting to know the nurses that work there – they will become your teammates pretty soon.
- Ask what the visiting hours and policies are, in case your baby does stay at the hospital longer than you do. Ask if food, a bed, or transportation is offered for parents who want to stay with their babies.

### ✔ HOSPITAL SOCIAL WORKER

- Ask this person about Department of Children and Families (DCF) involvement, discharge planning, and getting in touch with important resources like Home Visiting, Visiting Nurses, and Early Intervention. (More information on these resources is in *Journey Point 4: Sources of Support*).
- This person should also receive a copy of your **Birth Planning Checklist**, or the collection of documents that will help you prepare for DCF, if they are involved. (Look for the **Birth Planning Checklist** in the Journey resource page: [www.linktoresourcespage.u.rl](http://www.linktoresourcespage.u.rl).)



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*It's especially important, when you're meeting with the doctors or professionals at the hospital, to remember that you all want the same thing: a safe delivery and a healthy baby! You don't have to feel guilty or ashamed. Whatever substances your baby was exposed to while you were pregnant, what matters now is that you team up with your providers, and the hospital staff to help your baby enter the world safe and healthy.*

## Other Ways To Prepare For Baby:

- ✔ **CHILDCARE**—If you have other children at home, who will take care of them while you are in the hospital?
- ✔ **TRANSPORTATION**—How will you get to the hospital for prenatal appointments and for delivery? If your baby stays in the hospital past the time you are discharged, how will you get to and from the hospital for visitation? When it is time to take your baby home, who will pick you up? Do you have a car seat that is properly installed to pick baby up?
- ✔ **HOUSING**—Where will you and baby live? Do you have a safe and sober home to bring baby to? Do you need help finding a sober living program or Family Treatment Home? Call 1-866-705-2807 for help finding housing or residential treatment for families.
- ✔ **MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER**—Do you have a counselor or therapist you trust? If not, it's a great idea to connect with one. This person can listen to you and support you through your pregnancy and parenting journey.
- ✔ **BIRTH COACH**—Do you have someone who will go with you to the hospital and support you while you give birth? Do they know what you want for your delivery? Do they know how to support your recovery, as well as your Journey into Motherhood?
- ✔ **OTHER SUPPORTS**—Can you connect with a Recovery Coach, a Peer Care Coordinator, or a Community Support Worker? These people are often other mothers, with similar experiences, that can walk you through this process, offer support, and help you get to your appointments. Call an Out-Patient Substance Use Treatment program in your area to see if these supports are available. You can also call your Health Insurance Provider to find a Peer Support Specialist.