



2. Birth Preparedness for a Safe Delivery

What is Birth Preparedness?

This is a method of planning in advance by the pregnant mother and her family for a safe and comfortable delivery and for care after delivery. You should help every family make this plan in consultation with the ANM.

What are the choices available to the mother?

1. **If there are any danger signs or complications:**
Identify the nearest institution (CHC/District Hospital) which has the staff and equipment to provide Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (CEmONC), and counsel the mother and the family to go there.
2. **If there are no complications:** Counsel the mother to go to the PHC which is open 24 X 7, where there is a team of doctors and nurses or ANMs to conduct the delivery and provide care for the mother and newborn. These institutions can manage some complications and transfer immediately to a higher facility if complications requiring surgery or blood transfusion develop. The list of such institutions can be obtained from the ANM. The place should be clean and safe and friendly and have a skilled nurse or doctor at all times. The woman would have to stay there for 48 hours after delivery.
3. **If there are no complications and mother and her family are reluctant or unable to go to the 24x7 PHC or if it is too far away:** Advise the mother could go the Sub-Centre, provided it is accredited as a delivery centre, which means the ANM has been trained as a Skilled Birth Attendant (SBA), and is available, and there are minimum facilities for delivery.
4. **If there are no complications or not a high risk case for developing complications and the mother and family insist on delivering at home, despite counselling:** You could work with the ANM to enable a delivery by SBA. This should be agreed to only if you are sure that the family can organise transport and funds at very short notice. The SBA should be able to arrive within 30 minutes of the onset of labour at the home/Sub-Centre and should be able to stay through the process of labour and for a few hours afterwards. A team of two or three women with experience in attending at labour would be helpful.

What does a birth preparedness plan contain?

(See Annexe-3 for format for individual plan)

When should a birth preparedness plan be readied?

It should be ready as early as possible after confirming the pregnancy, and in consultation with the family (husband, mother-in-law, or other decision makers). You should review the plan in the third trimester (after seventh month) with the family and the ANM. At this time, the choice of institution and the transport should be finalised.