



12 Questions to Ask Your OB

I know most women choose an obstetrician on recommendations from family, friends, or their Internet GP (Dr Google). However, it is really important that you choose an obstetrician or care giver who is right for your family and personal circumstances. And you need to know that the fit is right from the very first meeting.

To help you, I've compiled a list of questions to take along to your first (or next) OB appointment.

I believe you should ask them as early on as possible. It would be great if you could go through them all once on your very first meeting (make sure you ask to book extra time) or you could ask 2 or 3 each visit.

Question 1: What are your beliefs about birth?

The type of response you want is: "I believe birth is a normal physiological function that most women are designed to do well. Very occasionally things deviate and that's when I step in."

Question 2: What are your thoughts on Birth Plans and how much will you take my preferences in to account when making decisions about intervention?

I have written a lot on Birth Plans, and I know you can't plan everything and sometimes births don't go to plan. But it is good to have some sort of plan that you've discussed with your partner and caregivers. You can be sure that your OB will have a plan in their head (you could ask what this is) so you need to have one too. This is how you can come up with a great mutual plan.

Question 3: What are your induction rates? What reasons can you see for performing an induction on me?

Some OBs have policies of inducing you on your 'due date', some will wait 4 days, others will wait 10 days. You need to know where your OB sits. I have written a lot on this topic too.

What if you and your baby are not ready until 42 weeks. How will your OB feel about you waiting until your body and your baby are ready.



Question 4: What are your thoughts on continual fetal monitoring.

Again this varies widely but you want to hear that your OB will only use continual fetal monitoring if your birth is high risk. Also ask if the hospital they work at has mobile monitors or even the new waterproof ones.

Question 5: What are your c section rates? And what are the main reasons for c sections with your patients?

This is such an important question that it always amazes me no body asks it. A few of the main reasons your OB may mention is age, BMI, or a breech baby. You will want to know if your OB follows his policies to the letter or is flexible and negotiable with his recommendation for c sections.

Question 6: What are your policies around timing labour? How long do you think each stage should last?

This is something you will need to read a bit about as there is a lot of research saying women are not being giving enough time in labour (especially second stage) and this is increasing the c section rates. There is no scientific research to even prove that all labours should last for a certain amount of time, and yet the medical guidelines seem to consider anything over 12 hours as “failure to progress”. Be sure that you know what you want when it comes to labour and timing, and that your OB is on board. You can read through my blogs for more information.

Question 7: How important do you think delayed cord clamping is?

Again, do some research. There is a lot of information now showing that optimal cord clamping practices are what we used to call “delayed” and you will want to go into an appointment with your OB knowing exactly what you want to ask for.



Question 8: What position do most of your women give birth in?

This should open up a discussion about active birth and the best positions for labour and birth (which is not on your back in stirrups!)

Question 9 : What are your preferences for the delivery of the placenta?

Notice I have said preferences. Every thing should negotiable, but sometimes this isn't and you need to decide how you feel about this.

Question 10: Do they work with doulas and support people? If not why not?

This will probably lead to a very lively discussion, and it is up to you how you feel about the answers.

Question 11: When are you going on holidays?

This is really important so that you know if there will be any additional pressure for induction or if you will end up with a totally different OB than the one you've just spent time negotiating with.

Question 12: Who is your back up and can I meet them soon?

Most people choose OBs because they want continuity of care.

However, OBs are humans and they can't work 24/7, but birth is 24/7. So you need to meet the backup OB and start building a relationship with him/her. Ensure you ask them the questions you need to know the answers to.