



Getting started

Writing about your birth story is a powerful way to heal from a frightening birth experience. As you set out to write your story, ask your partner, doula or someone else you trust to support your journey. We've also put together these six steps to help you get started.



STEP 1: Write your story in any way that feels right.

Get your thoughts down as soon as possible—even within the first few days after giving birth. Don't worry about grammar, punctuation or format. Use paragraphs or bullets, write in a journal or on your computer. Draw pictures if that helps. Just get it all out in a way that works for you.



STEP 2: Tap into your senses during the birth experience.

Close your eyes, and think back to your baby's birth. What did you see, hear or smell? If a family member took photos, look at the pictures. Did you have a labor playlist? If so, play the songs while you write. Music has a way of unlocking memories and emotions.



STEP 3: Consider going over your medical records.

If you had a difficult delivery, you might not remember or understand the medical issues that came up. At your postpartum visit, ask your doctor to go over the details and answer your questions. But keep in mind that this talk can open up any trauma, so consider your emotions before having the discussion.



STEP 4: Tell your birth story to people who were there.

Who was with you during the birth? Tell them what you experienced before you ask them what they saw. After you've given your version of events, get their input to help you fill in any gaps you might have.



STEP 5: Re-read your birth story for extra details.

After you've written down your thoughts, walk away. Come back in a few days—or even a few months—to re-read what you wrote. By giving yourself time to process your experience, you might have a different view. Add any extra details or thoughts at this time.



STEP 6: Share your birth story with other parents.

Sharing your birth story is a personal decision. You might want to keep your story to yourself, or you might find strength in sharing your story with other parents online. March of Dimes offers a special place where you can [share your story](#).



THOUGHT STARTERS

When writing your birth story, here are some questions to help you along. These are just a guide, so only include what applies to you—and, of course, add any other personal details.

- How did you feel when you found out you were pregnant?
- Did you have any symptoms or problems during your pregnancy?
- What were you doing when you went into labor?
- Where did you give birth? Who was there?
- How were you treated by your doctor and hospital staff?
- If a partner was present, what did they say and do in the delivery room?
- How far along were your contractions? How long did you push?
- Were there any problems during delivery? What happened?
- Describe the moment you first saw your baby. How did you feel?
- Did you or your baby need medical attention after the birth? Why?
- How long did you stay in the hospital? Who came to visit?
- How did it feel when you came home from the hospital?

