

*Just be*  
**B.L.A.C.K**



Tips for preparing for  
birth as a Black person

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# Black Birth Matters

Preparing for birth is a huge deal for anyone. For Black folks, there is an added layer that must be considered. With disparities for both the birthing person and baby, we must do more to protect ourselves. This guide is exactly that! **5 steps in one easy-to-remember acronym.**



## Remember

Remember that **you are never at fault** for any harm you receive in health-care spaces. This guide is to help you organize the aspects of birth you can control and be aware of the ones that you can't.

Preparing for the arrival of your newest family member is a huge job. Lots to organize, prepare, cook, wash, tidy and manage. Delegating these tasks can help free up time for you to focus on YOU.

In addition to the usual preparations that come along with having a baby, being Black and having a baby can come with it's own set of challenges. So, when in doubt, just be B.L.A.C.K



## Just Be B.L.A.C.K

**B** Be in the best possible situation

**L** Learn about your options

**A** Advocate for yourself & your baby

**C** Connect with community

**K** Know your rights

As we explore each of these points, make sure you are viewing these suggestions from your own life context. Take what resonates, shift what can be modified and disregard things that are not applicable.

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*"There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives."- Audra Lord*



# B

*Be in the best  
situation  
possible*

## Be in the best situation possible

There is immense privilege in being able to have the care team of your dreams and give birth in the location of your dreams.

Sometimes this just isn't possible for a variety of reasons. What is important, is that you are doing what you can to ensure you are delivering your baby in a place that you feel safe and with people you trust.

- ✓ Safe birth location
- ✓ Supportive birth team
- ✓ Competent health care provider
- ✓ Establish postpartum plans
- ✓ Create emergency plans
- ✓ Get second opinions
- ✓ Do additional research

# L *Learn about your options*

## Learn about ALL of your options

This is where birth planning can help you get a better understanding of what is available to you. Often people think that there are only two choices when it comes to pain during labour, 1 get an epidural, or 2, suffer. This is 100% not the case and there are other things, medical and non medical that can be done for pain management during labour.

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*If you don't know your options you don't have any at all*



## Options related to:

- ✓ Choosing a birth location
- ✓ Choosing a health care provider
- ✓ Pain management options
- ✓ Birth Modes
- ✓ Comfort measures
- ✓ Interventions
- ✓ Newborn procedures
- ✓ Home coming timeline



# A *Advocate for yourself & your baby*

## Advocacy can look like:

- ✿ Requesting an intervention when you feel you need more care
- ✿ Declining an intervention when you feel it is not the best choice
- ✿ Asking for more information or clarification before making a decision

Advocating for yourself and your baby can show up in a number of different ways. It can definitely feel like a tiring task especially when you have to do it often as you navigate health care systems. People usually think that advocacy looks like standing on the front steps of city hall with a megaphone but it can actually be smaller actions like requesting additional time to make an informed decision or requesting more information about options before making a decision. Sometimes we may even need to advocate for our children when it comes to newborn procedures or ensuring the way we intend to feed our children is honored.



# C

## *Connect with Community*

## Connect with your Community

- ✓ Talk to friends
- ✓ Join parenting groups
- ✓ Connect with family elders
- ✓ Read birth stories
- ✓ Read Black authored books

Becoming a parent is a huge life change. Ensuring that you have a strong supportive community behind you will give you somewhere to turn when you need your village. A sense of community can be found in a whole host of places, your neighbourhood, in Facebook groups, at your place of worship, your local library and even within your own family. Reach out to people who can share with you the things they wish they knew about birth in away that is helpful to you, not for the purpose of traumatizing you. Ask for support in preparing meals or preparing your home for your baby. After birth, you can lean on your community for emotional support, extra hands around the house and even as a way to find resources. Parenting should never be done in isolation, you deserve to have a supportive community backing you up!

# K Know your rights



## Know what your rights as a patient

Always remember that it is YOUR birth and YOU are the star of the show! You have rights as a human and deserve care that respects your needs and wishes. It can be difficult to challenge authority especially when you are feeling vulnerable. This is where a supportive birth team can help protect you from unwanted interventions. You should talk with your team ahead of your birth about what is most important to you.

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*You do not lose your autonomy the moment you enter a hospital*

## You have the right to:

- ✓ Say no to an unwanted procedure
- ✓ Say no to an unwanted exam
- ✓ Say no to unwanted testing
- ✓ Request an intervention that has not been offered
- ✓ Review your records
- ✓ Request documentation

\*Ensure you understand all of the risks and benefits to interventions before requesting or declining them. Make sure that the choices you make are the best choice for you and your baby. This is not about declining something just for the sake of it.



## Conclusion and Next Steps

As you prepare for your birth, keep in mind the 5 principles of being B.L.A.C.K. These tips will help you to set yourself up for a positive birth experience. Keep in mind that even the best laid plans can go off the rails and that is why having back up plans for necessary inductions or c-sections can make all the difference.

If you would like one on one support in planning your birth you can book a birth planning session with me on my website at [www.cheyennescarlett.ca](http://www.cheyennescarlett.ca) Together we can talk about your specific needs and desires to put a plan in place.



*Thank you!*

*Remember, you are worthy and you  
deserve the best!*



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