

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE HOSPITAL?

For most women, the time at the hospital is the hardest. The birthmother can choose who will be in the delivery room with them, including the adoptive parents. If the birthmother does not want them there, they can either wait or be notified after the delivery. After the delivery, there are quite a few different ways the process can proceed. The adoptive parents may take care of the child immediately, they may wait until both mother and baby are released from the hospital, or the baby may go into a temporary care facility while the birthmother makes sure she wants to go through with the adoption. The important thing to remember is that the birthmother can decide how this all happens. Decide what is best for you and your child and let others know so that they can help make it happen.

WILL MY CHILD HATE ME WHEN HE/SHE GETS OLDER?

This is a very real concern for birthmothers. They question if their child will think they were hated by their mother or if they were just callously abandoned. The reality is that it is unlikely the child will believe either of those things. Most adoptions now are open or semi-open. The child is normally aware that they were adopted and "chosen" by the adoptive parents. Very frequently the adoptive parents help the child understand their heritage by telling them about their birthmother and the choice of love she made. But, even without these things, children who find out they are adopted tend toward curiosity and hope. Many will want to meet their birthmother later in life, not out of hate, but out of a desire to know their own story.

As you are interviewing the adoptive parents, make sure you ask them if they will tell the child that he or she was adopted. Ask how they will talk about you, the birthmother, and make sure you let them know your wishes. Finally, if you want to make the path to finding you easier, make sure to update the adoptive parents with your contact information.

ADOPT OR NOT?

Adoption is a major decision not only for your life but for the life of your child. Consider it carefully. It is your decision. Don't be pressured into choosing something you don't want. Look at all the facts of both parenting and adopting, and make a decision that is right for you and your baby.

1. Flango, Victor and Flango, Carol. "How Many Children Were Adopted in 1992," at pg. 1022, *Child Welfare*, Vol. LXXIV, No. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1995).
2. Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, *Benchmark Survey*. 1997.

For help with your pregnancy and more information on adoption or abortion, please contact:

A Place for Women in Waipio
808-678-3991

Or call the 24-hour help-line at 1-800-395-HELP

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ADOPTION: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

FOR THE BIRTHMOTHER

Deciding if you want to place your child for adoption is a very hard decision. The process can be confusing and full of laws and rules. It is also full of many emotions of your own and also of those around you who may be pressuring you in either direction. Below is a list of questions you may have about adoption that can help you decide what is best for you and your baby.

IS ADOPTION HARD?

Yes. A mother naturally connects with the baby in her womb and it is not easy to give that blessing to someone else. If you decide to adopt, it will be an emotional time. Even though it is hard, many women still go through with it because they are choosing what is best for them and their child.

WILL I BE ABLE TO SEE MY BABY?

There are three types of adoptions: open, closed, and semi-closed. In an open adoption, you are able to see the baby at intervals that are determined when you complete the adoption paperwork. In a semi-closed adoption, you are able to receive both pictures and information from the adoptive parents. In a closed adoption, the baby is given to the adoptive parents. No further communication is made. It is for you to decide which type of adoption you want. There are positives and negatives to each. You need to decide what is best for you and your baby.

IF I DECIDE TO ADOPT, CAN I CHANGE MY MIND LATER?

Until you sign the adoption papers, you can change your mind on whether to adopt or parent. In some states, once the papers are signed you may still have a waiting period where you may change your mind. Once the adoption is complete, the adoption is for life.

DO I GET TO CHOOSE THE PARENTS?

In almost all adoptions in the U.S., you are able to choose a couple from a list of profiles. You can normally specify certain things you really want (such as religion or race) and look just through those options. In the end, it is your choice which family your baby goes to.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY BABY WILL BE OKAY?

When you are choosing a family for your baby, you are investing in your baby's future. You have an opportunity to ask questions and get more information to ensure they are the right match. There is no guarantee that everything will be perfect for your child, but there are very few adoptions that have problems.

WILL I GET ANYTHING FOR PLACING MY CHILD FOR ADOPTION?

The reward for adopting really is knowing that your child is going to a loving family and that you are getting a chance to continue to grow. While most states allow for pregnancy and birth-related expenses to be paid for by the adoption agency or adoptive parents, but no further compensation is allowed. In other words, adoption is not about what you get, it is about giving opportunity to you and your baby.

WHAT IF I FEEL PRESSURED TO ADOPT?

Adoption is a personal decision that only you can make. Unfortunately, it is very common

for people to pressure you either to go through with the adoption or keep the baby. While each may have good points, you must make this decision for yourself. If you are feeling too much pressure, remove yourself from the source for a period of time so you can think it through. You should not make a decision one way or another based on what others think. You need to make this decision for you and your baby.

IF I ADOPT, DOES THAT MAKE ME STRANGE?

Adopting a baby doesn't make a mother strange, it just makes her someone willing to make a hard decision. As a matter of fact, over 125,000 adoptions occur every year in the United States.¹ Adoption has become more and more common to the point that 58% of Americans know someone who has been adopted, has adopted a child, or has placed their child for adoption.²

WILL OTHERS LOOK DOWN ON ME?

How people react depends on the person. Some people and some cultures have very strong opinions on adoption. Others have no opinion at all. While you are not responsible for others' reactions, you do hold the key to whether they react since it is your choice to tell them or not. This information is personal for you, and you may choose if and when you will share the information. Others around you who know about the adoption need to respect the event as personal and let you disclose it only when you want to.