

User's Guide for the Birth Preparedness Card

Section 1: Identification information of the Pregnant Woman Receiving the Card (front of card)

1. Enter the woman's names on the card
2. Enter the address of the pregnant woman
3. Enter the name of the head of the pregnant woman's household. (In some cases this could be the woman herself)
4. Enter the name of the assistant chief
5. Enter the name of the women's group or other group that is distributing the birth preparedness cards (this could also be the health facility)
6. Ask the pregnant women if she has visited the Antenatal Clinic, and which dates she went. This information is on her ANC card from the health centre. Ask her to make sure the dates for future Antenatal visits are entered. The woman, the nurse at the facility, or someone in her family can enter the dates.

If she has not gone for Antenatal Clinic, talk with her and her family about why ANC is important for pregnant women and tell her which facilities run the clinics.

7. Show the woman where to enter the dates of postpartum care on the card when she receives it. If you visit her after birth, you can help her enter the dates.

If you visit after birth and a skilled health worker has not yet checked the woman and her newborn, talk with her and her family about the importance of care in the first week after birth for new mothers and newborns. Inform her where she can receive this care.

Section 2: Preparing for my baby (see inside the card)

PREGNANT WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILY SHOULD DISCUSS BIRTH AND DECIDE EARLY IN PREGNANCY

1. Fill in the dates of her last period and the date she expects to deliver her baby. This information is on the antenatal card.

Discuss with the woman and her family why it is important to talk about where the woman will deliver, who will deliver her, if the resources necessary for the birth are available for the woman.

2. Enter the place where she wants to deliver her baby
3. Enter the type of person who the women wants to assist during her labour and childbirth

If the woman and her family seem unaware of the benefits of skilled care during pregnancy, childbirth and after child birth discuss with them the sort of things they need to do to make sure that the birth can be safer.

4. Enter the type of person the woman wishes to visit to have a check up for her and her new baby a week after birth.
5. Discuss with the woman and her family about the need to be prepared for the costs involved for childbirth as well as in case of an emergency. The woman and family need to decide if there is enough money in the household to be prepared/set aside for costs for normal birth, and in case there are any problems with the birth. Fill in the section of the card on savings.
6. Review the list of things she should have and things she should do to be prepared for the birth. Ask if there are any other things she thinks she should prepare that you have not talked about. Enter on the card.

It might also be helpful to check with the nurse/midwife from the nearest health facility what the delivery fee covers – most facilities should provide all necessary items. (jik, cotton, gloves etc)

Section 3: What to do in case of an emergency (inside the card)

PREGNANT WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILY SHOULD KNOW WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF EMERGENCY DURING PREGNANCY, BIRTH OR AFTER BIRTH

Talk with the woman and family about complications during pregnancy and birth. You can use the list of problems and danger signs on the back of the card to remind you. Ask the woman what she will do if any of these things happen, where will she go for emergency care?

1. Enter the names of the health facilities she might use in an emergency, talk about the cost of travelling to that facility, the cost to deliver there and the cost of the transport to get there and the means of transport. Enter these details in the columns.
2. Fill in any other costs she might expect in an emergency (e.g. for a caesarean section at the nearest hospital etc)
3. Discuss with the woman and family who would accompany the woman to the facility if there were a problem, and enter this name on the card. If there is no one to accompany her, try and help her to find someone to help.
4. Find out the information about nearest source of transport for birth and or emergencies and the name of the closest person with a telephone the family could use in an emergency. Enter that information and the telephone numbers of the health facility.

Try and identify people in the village who have mobile/cell phones that could be used in emergencies during pregnancy and birth. Think of other people who may also be able to help in an emergency who have a telephone and /or transport, for example the police station, DO's office or others. Fill in these numbers.

Section 4: Signs of problems that can occur in pregnancy, childbirth & after birth

ALL WOMEN WITH THESE PROBLEMS SHOULD GET EMERGENCY CARE AS FAST AS POSSIBLE

Discuss with the woman and family that most pregnancies and births are normal. It is good to expect the best, but be prepared in advance for problems if they do happen.