

## Palm Beach Obstetrics & Gynecology, PA

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### Obstetric Informed Consent

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Pregnancy and delivery are usually exciting and joyful occasions. Most of our patients are healthy and take excellent care of themselves. Even when our patients are, for one reason or another at higher risk, the end results are a happy and healthy mother and baby. However, even a normal pregnancy and delivery are not without risk. Our doctors have the training and experience to handle problems safely and effectively. We want you to read this form carefully so that you understand some of the limitations of modern medicine and some of the dangers associated with pregnancy, labor and delivery.

The following are important points to keep in mind during your pregnancy and delivery:

1. Ultrasound examinations have certain limitations. Not all abnormalities can be diagnosed with an ultrasound. Even with a good ultrasound machine and well-trained personnel, some abnormalities may be missed. This is due to the position of the baby, the size of the patient, the timing of the ultrasound or other factors. Approximately 3 to 4% of all fetuses have some type of abnormality. Many of these cannot be diagnosed by ultrasound, such as: genetic problems, cerebral palsy, mental retardation, and lung maturity.
2. You will be offered a blood test called an alpha-fetoprotein to screen for Down's Syndrome, Spina Bifida and Trisomy 18. This test only shows the statistical chances of having a baby with one of these conditions. Most of the "positive" tests are false positives, meaning the baby does not have any of these conditions. Unfortunately, some negative tests are false negatives, meaning the baby has one of the conditions even though the test was negative. If your test is positive, you will have counseling with one of the doctors so you can choose the best course of action.
3. If you are 35 years old or over on your due date, you will be offered a diagnostic test called an amniocentesis. This test is invasive and carries risks that the doctor will discuss with you. If you choose not to have this procedure, you may still elect to have the alpha-fetoprotein test described above, which may help you in making a decision. Before you choose or refuse an amniocentesis, you will have extensive discussions with the doctors regarding the risks, benefits and alternatives to this test.
4. Our doctors may recommend a cesarean section for a variety of reasons. Sometimes the decision is made during labor for reasons that cannot be predicted during pregnancy, such as fetal distress. Approximately 25% of babies born in the United States are delivered by cesarean section. Like with any major surgery, there are risks associated with having a cesarean section. The most common complications are excessive bleeding, infection, and injury to internal organs. You may have a different sensation at the site of the incision but rarely prolonged pain. There may be other complications, and in rare circumstances, damage to a limb or organ, paralysis, cardiac arrest or death.
5. A vaginal delivery also has possible risks to the baby and the patient. The doctor may determine that you need an episiotomy, or you may suffer a vaginal laceration. Most episiotomies and vaginal lacerations are easy to

repair and will heal normally. But on rare occasions, they can lead to complications such as: chronic pain, bleeding, infection, formation of a fistula (a connection between either the bladder and the vagina or the rectum and the vagina), or incontinence. Any delivery may require forceps or vacuum assistance. The doctors have extensive experience and training in the use of these instruments and they are generally safe and effective. However, you may suffer a more extensive vaginal laceration, or the baby may have a temporary or permanent injury. Permanent injury may also occur if there is difficulty in delivering the baby's shoulders (shoulder dystocia). This is an infrequent and unpredictable event, but is more likely to occur if the mother has diabetes and/or a large baby.

6. A serious hemorrhage after a vaginal delivery is rare, but may require a blood transfusion. In rare circumstances you can acquire a disease such as HIV or hepatitis as a result of receiving a blood transfusion. If you refuse a blood transfusion for any reason, you should discuss in detail these issues with the doctors, and provide written documentation to make sure that your wishes are carried out. In very rare occasions, the hemorrhage cannot be controlled without surgery, and you may require removal of the uterus leaving you unable to have more children.

In most cases, you will have a successful pregnancy even when there are some complications, but diseases such as toxemia or diabetes can occur without warning. As a result, nobody can guarantee a normal pregnancy and a good outcome even though the doctors cared for you properly and you cared for yourself properly. We encourage you to discuss any of these issues with us at any of your visits.

By signing below, I, \_\_\_\_\_, request that my obstetric care, including any necessary procedures described above, be provided by **Palm Beach Obstetrics & Gynecology, PA** and its physicians and Midwife.

I was furnished information prepared by the Florida Birth-Related Neurological Injury Compensation Association (NICA), and was advised that our Doctors (Samuel Lederman MD, Gloria Hakkarainen MD, Sylvia Siegfried, Joy Cavalaris MD and Lori Seald MD) are participating physicians in that program. By participating in this program, limited compensation is available in the event that a specific neurological injury occurs during labor, delivery or resuscitation of the baby. For specifics about the program, I understand that I can contact the Florida Birth-Related Neurological Injury Compensation Association (NICA), at PO Box 14567, Tallahassee, FL 32317, Tel No. 1.800.398.2129. I further acknowledge that I have received a copy of the brochure prepared by NICA.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I read this form, that I fully understand its contents, that I was given ample opportunity to ask questions and that all questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I also acknowledge that I was given a copy of this form so that my family and I can review its contents at home and ask questions in the future.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patient

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date