

Module 9

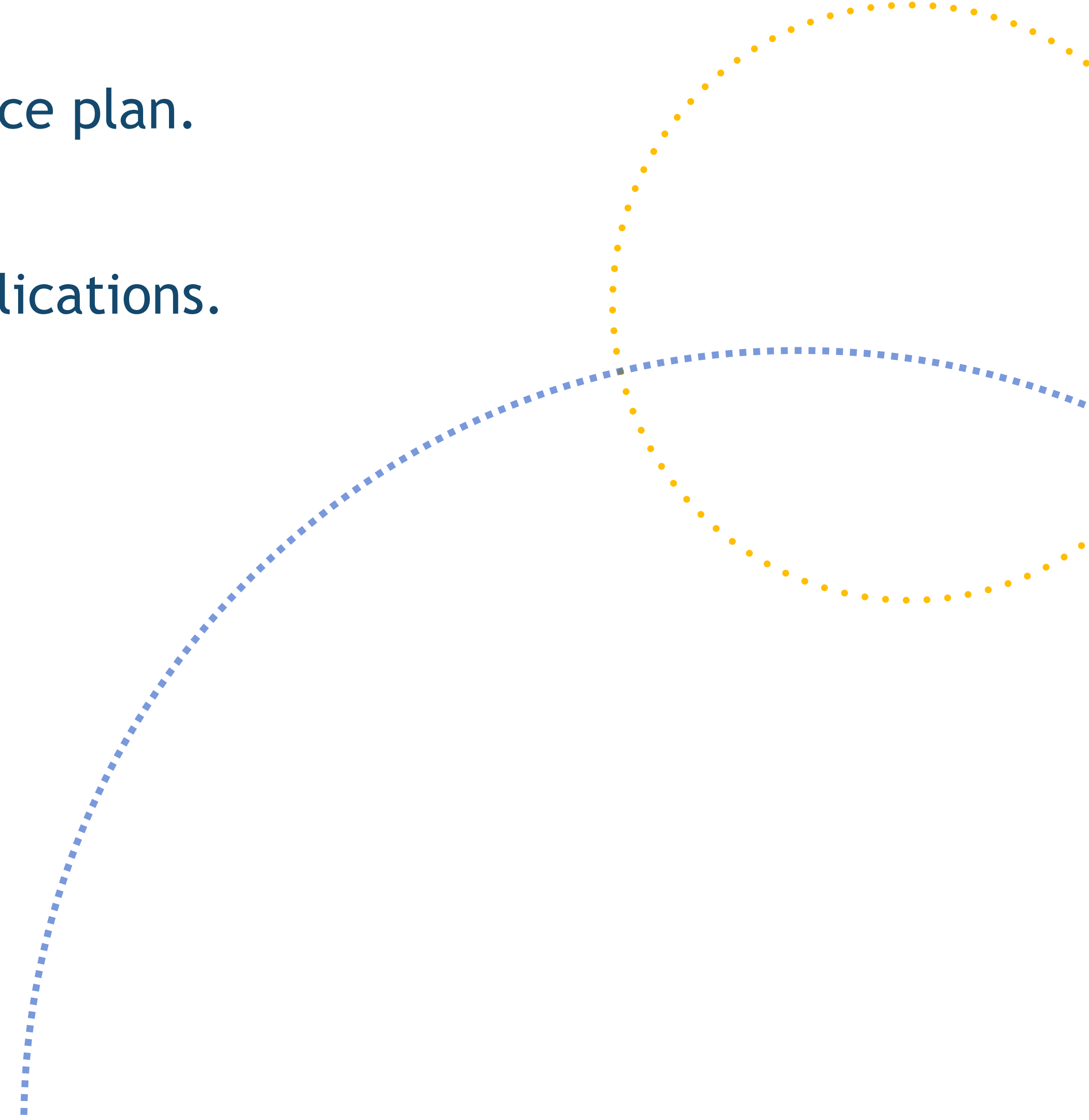
If I Want a VBAC, Where Can I Give Birth?

Hospital? Birth Center? Home?

Planning a **Hospital VBAC**



Advantages of Planning a Hospital VBAC

- ⦿ Your birth is likely to be covered by your insurance plan.
 - ⦿ You can have an epidural.
 - ⦿ You'll have access to a cesarean in case of complications.
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Disadvantages of **Planning a Hospital VBAC**

- You're more likely to have routine interventions that complicate labor.
- You're more likely to have labor augmented with oxytocin if your labor slows down.
- You're less likely to have freedom of movement.
- You're less likely to have a variety of methods of pain relief.



VBAC-Friendly Hospitals

- Although many hospitals do not offer medical care for VBAC, some have made it possible to work with a mother's birth plan and still provide safe care.
- You and your baby may be monitored with a telemetry unit giving you the freedom to walk around the labor and delivery floor.
- Your caregiver may establish an IV site (Heparin Lock) in case you may need a cesarean but not attach it to any fluids if not necessary.
- Your own physician may agree to stay in the hospital until you give birth.

Dr. Tami Michele, DO, Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Gerber Memorial Hospital, Fremont, Michigan. Personal communications.
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Some Hospitals Develop Their Own Guidelines to Support VBAC

- ◉ Some hospitals without “immediate” capability for an emergency cesarean may ask mothers to sign a *Refusal of Repeat Cesarean* form before formally admitting them on the labor and delivery unit.¹
- ◉ This allows mothers to labor for a VBAC with the understanding of the hospital’s staffing capabilities and response time in case a cesarean is needed.
- ◉ See an example of Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial Hospital’s *Refusal of Repeat Cesarean* form (as a pdf) in the *Resources for Parents*.

1. See Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial, Refusal of Repeat Cesarean Form in the Resources for Parents list.

Look for a **Supportive** Maternity Care Team

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To Increase Your Odds for a VBAC

Look for a Supportive Maternity Care Team

- ⦿ How do your caregivers view VBAC? With confidence or fear?
- ⦿ Are they giving you enough information to help you make decisions about your birth?
- ⦿ Are your care providers taking the time to answer your questions? To discuss the benefits and risks of treatments, procedures, and drugs?

Look for a Supportive Maternity Care Team

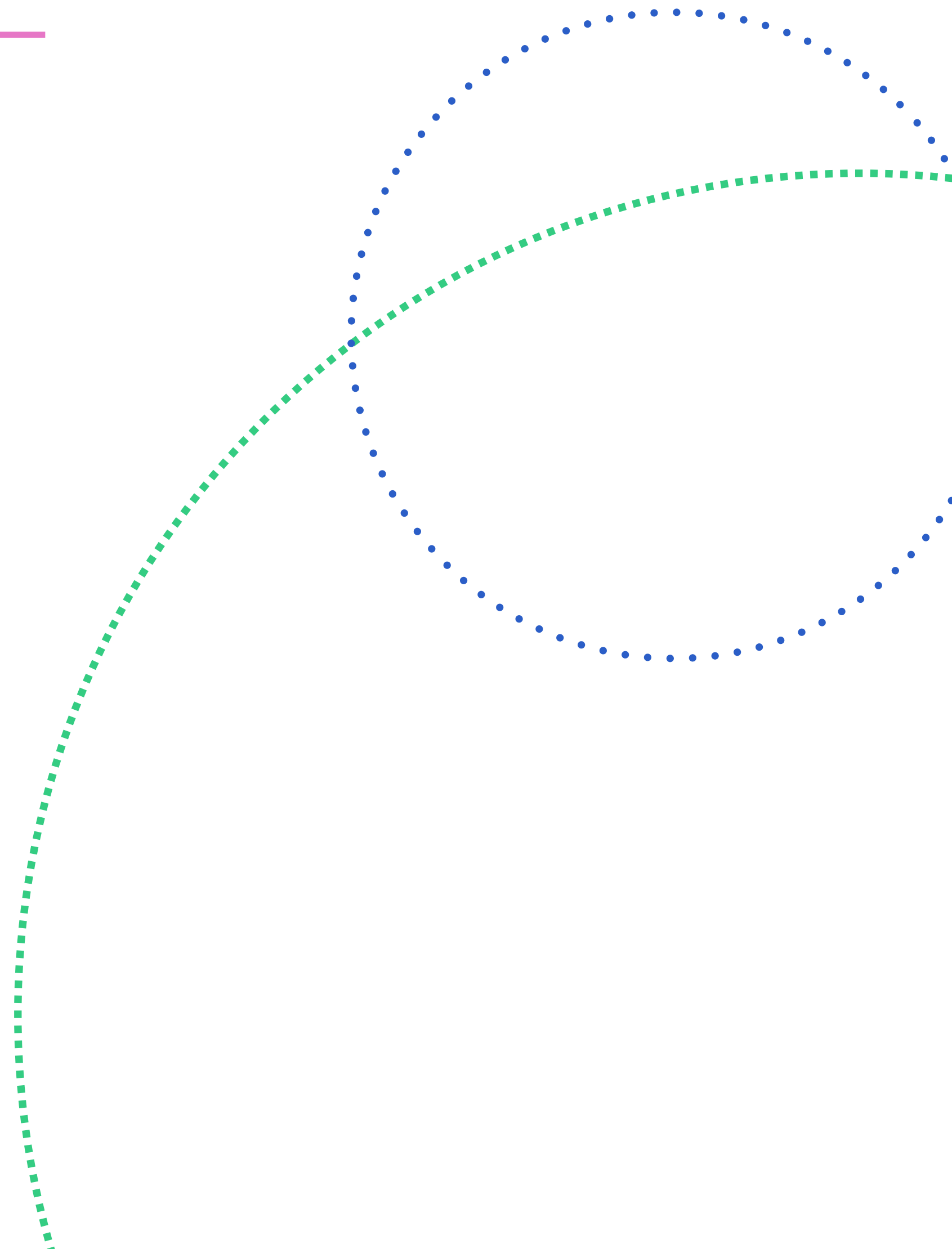
- Are they treating you with respect?
- Are they supportive of your wishes?
- Do they make you feel safe?
- Do they view labor and birth as a normal process?
- Do they encourage doulas, family members or partners to help you when you give birth?





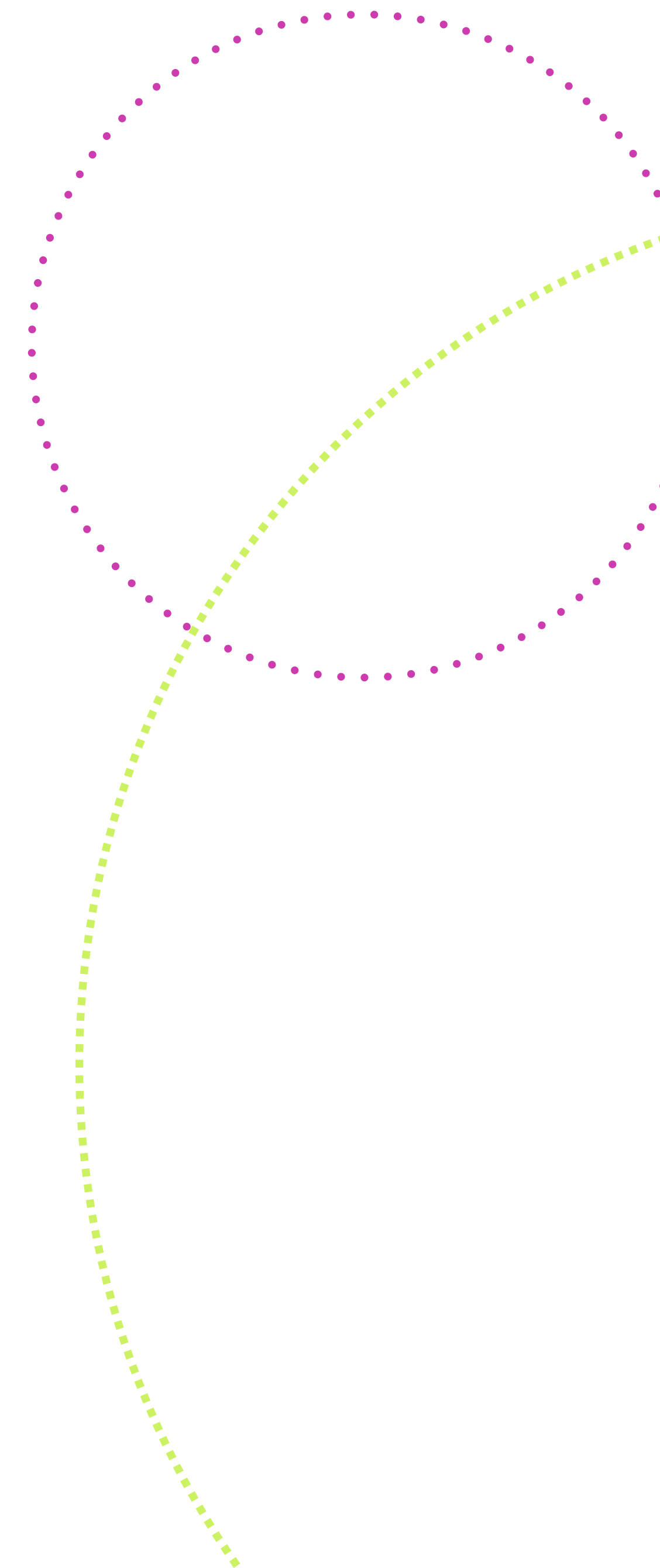
Look for a

Supportive Maternity Care Team

- Do they offer community resources that may be helpful to you such as a VBAC support group, prenatal yoga class, childbirth class, websites?
 - What are your caregivers' hesitations about VBAC? Can you discuss them so that you can labor with confidence?
 - If they are not comfortable with VBAC, are they giving you referrals to other providers, birth centers or hospitals that support VBAC?
 - If you don't feel that your caregiver can give you full support to labor for a VBAC, are you willing to consider making a change?
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Look for a Supportive Environment in Which to Give Birth

- Do you have access to a bath, birthing tub, or shower?
- Do you have the space to walk? Sit? Kneel?
- Do you have access to light foods and drink?
- Can the light be dimmed? Can noise be reduced?
- Can you listen to the music of your choice?
- Do you have privacy?
- Do you have a squat bar, birth stool, rocking chair or birth ball?
- Do you have furniture, pillows or a bed rail to lean on?



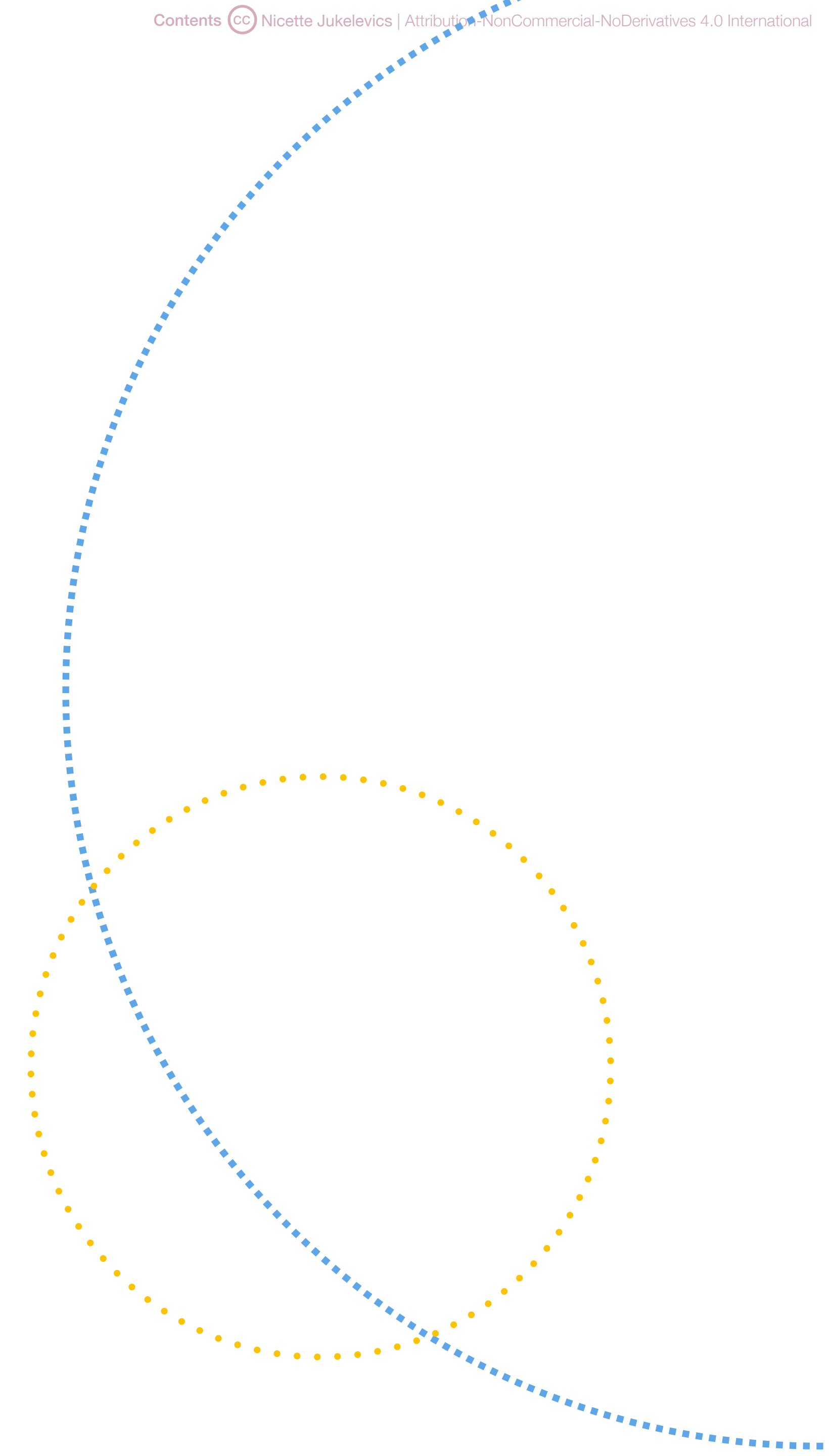
VBAC-Friendly Care

With VBAC-friendly caregivers who provide safe care while respecting your informed choices and a birthing environment that provides a variety of options to ease your pain and help your labor progress you have an excellent chance of giving birth normally.



Key Points to Review

- For many mothers, planning a VBAC in a hospital is the only option available. There are benefits and disadvantages.
- A hospital with low intervention and cesarean rates and high VBAC rates is more likely to be fully supportive of VBAC.
- Some hospitals have created VBAC supportive guidelines to give mothers what they need to have a safe vaginal birth.





Checklist for Parents

Questions to Ask for Birth in a Hospital

- What is your cesarean and VBAC rate?
- What are your intervention rates (induction, routine use of IV, continuous fetal monitoring)?
- Do you support non-drug methods of pain relief?
- Does your facility have VBAC guidelines? What are they?
- What protocols are left up to the doctor's or midwife's preference?
- Do you have a time limit for labor or birth?

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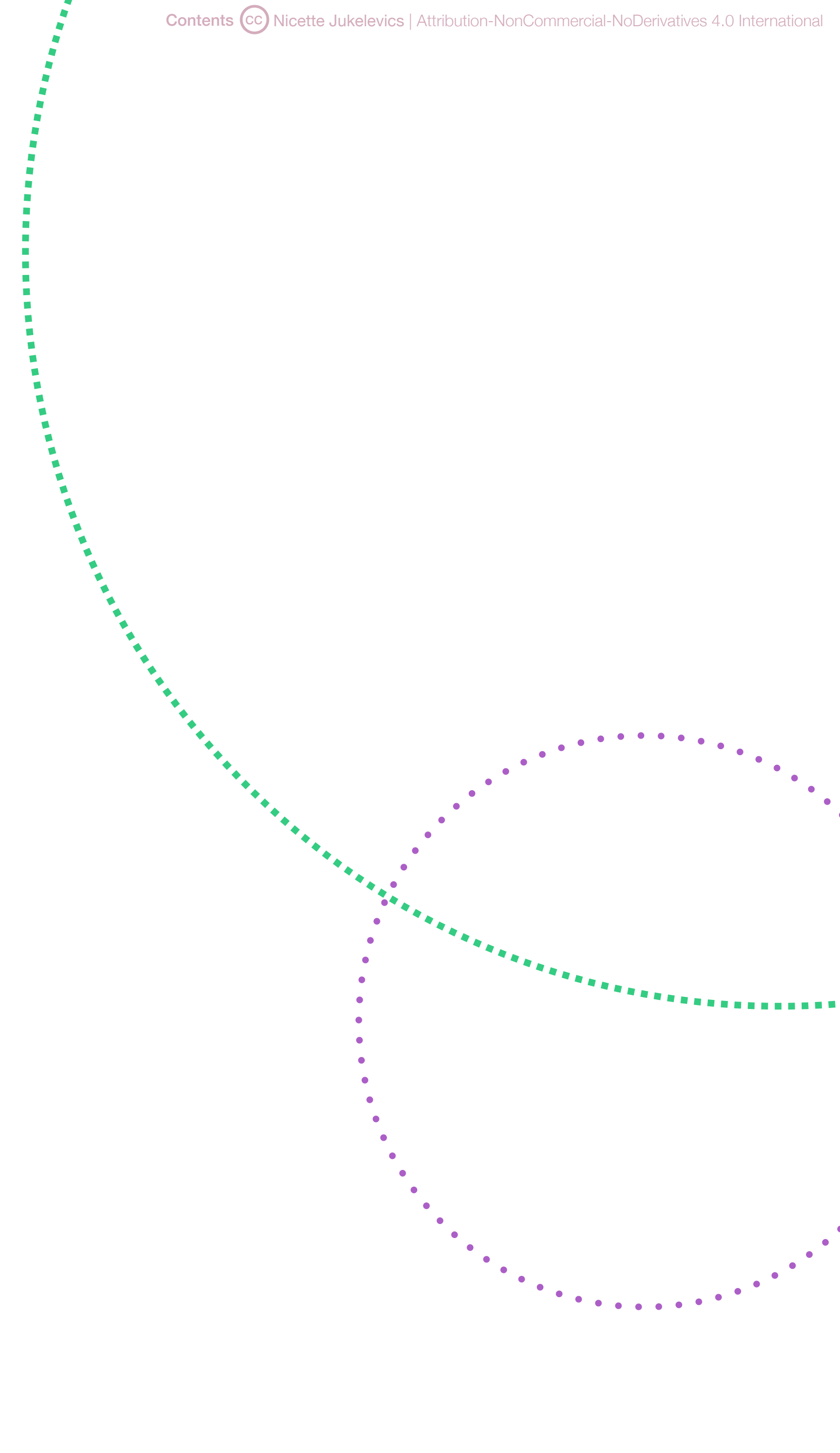
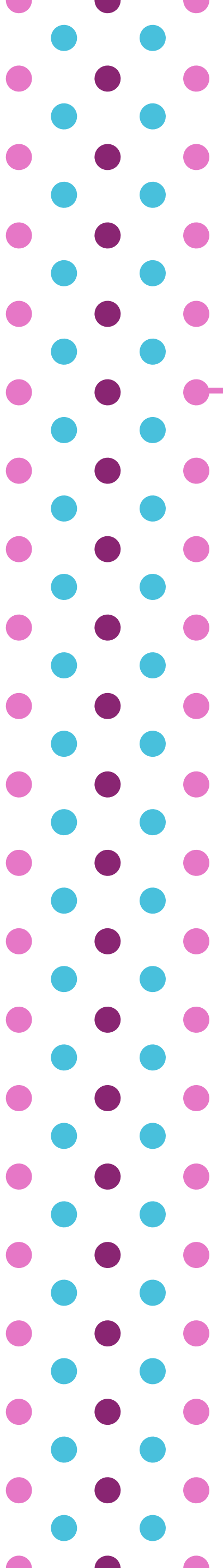
Questions to Ask for Birth in a Hospital

- Can I have my family members with me?
- Can I have my baby with me, skin-to-skin after birth?
- Do you have a lactation specialist to help me with breastfeeding?
- How do you respond to a potential non-vbac emergency such as a placental abruption (placenta separates from the uterine wall before the baby is born), fetal distress, shoulder dystocia or an umbilical cord prolapse?
- Can you refer me to another hospital that does support VBAC?



Resources for Parents

- ◎ **American College of Nurse Midwives**
Using Water for Labor and Birth
- ◎ **BirthNetwork National**
Finding a Mother-Friendly Care Provider
- ◎ **Choices in Childbirth**
Choose Your Birth Team
- ◎ **Childbirth Connection**
Choosing a Caregiver: What You Need to Know
Choosing a Place of Birth: What You Need to Know
Understanding & Navigating the Maternity Care System



Resources for Parents

- ◎ **Coalition for Improving Maternity Services**
Having a Baby? Ten Questions to Ask
- ◎ **Contra Costa Regional Medical Center (California)**
Vaginal Birth After Cesarean Improvement Project (video)
- ◎ **International Cesarean Awareness Network**
VBAC Policies in U.S. Hospitals
- ◎ **Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial Hospital**
Refusal of Repeat Cesarean Form [Appendix A in Teaching Guide]