



LABOR & DELIVERY — YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE LIFELONG PATIENTS

4 Best Practices to Improve New Parent Experiences

The birth of a newborn baby is frequently the first time many families enter a hospital. Having a child is a time of intense joy, but also one of the most overwhelming and potentially confusing times in a person's life.

Seventy-eight percent of women consider themselves to be the primary healthcare decision-maker for their household.

Thus, a positive labor and delivery experience — including everything from dining to environmental services (EVS) — can shape not only a patient's view of your hospital, but an entire family's, and can impact future decisions on receiving medical care in your facility.

This experience could lead to the start of not just a new life, but a new lifetime relationship with your healthcare system.

There are many ways your hospital can improve patient experiences from prenatal visits to delivery, and well visits following birth. These experiences will determine whether the new mothers and their families will become lifelong patients who return to your hospital for their future healthcare needs.

"The proper goal for any healthcare delivery system is to improve the value delivered to patients."

Harvard's Robert Kaplan
and Michael Porter

96%

"96% of patient complaints are related to overall experience, not just medical care."

Advisory Board

Four leading best practices can **help hospitals start building patient loyalty** during labor and delivery experiences:



BEST PRACTICE ONE

Improve Continuity of Care

“82% of Americans have had an ongoing relationship with their doctor, with the average length being 9.4 years. The trend holds true for Millennials too, as 78% believe that a long-term relationship with their doctor is important.”

[Kelton Global](#)

[Research shows](#) that when people are treated by the same professionals throughout their lives they receive better care because the teams know them and their medical histories. They perceive their providers to be more knowledgeable, thorough and interested in patient education. When patients receive continuous care, they value their doctor relationships more, feel like they have more control over their health and experience higher levels of satisfaction.

There are several best practices for improving the patient experience during labor and delivery.

- ▶ **1. Develop a rapport.**
Ensure your medical team is equipped to build long-term relationships with patients, from their first doctor visit to their child's well visits throughout their childhood. Additionally, encourage dining and EVS teams to engage patients when visiting their rooms through polite conversations, smiles and kind words.
- ▶ **2. Demonstrate concern for their comfort.**
While delivering the highest level of medical care, also aim to deliver the highest level of service in dining and EVS to ensure they are comfortable throughout their entire stay.
- ▶ **3. Respond to their requests.**
Bring flexibility to the table to respond to new mothers' special requests, such as a comforting meal after giving birth.
- ▶ **4. Give them control.**
Bring elements of patients' lives outside of the hospital into the experience, such as high-quality and customized dining experiences.
- ▶ **5. Welcome visitors.**
Make room for visitors and add homey touches such as comfortable chairs.
- ▶ **6. Encourage feedback.**
Give labor and delivery patients a convenient way to ask questions and request special services.



BEST PRACTICE TWO

Improve Patient Dining Experiences

“41% of healthcare consumers care just as much about taste as health benefits, wanting food that is equally tasty and nutritious.”

[What's Trending in Healthcare, April 2017, Datassential](#)

During their hospital stay, patients want a balance of comfort food and meals that reflect the food they eat outside of the hospital. Today's diners crave meals that are fresh and healthy yet comforting, use high-quality ingredients and allow a high degree of customization.

Here are four best practices to improve your hospital's dining experiences for labor and delivery patients.



1. Restaurant-Quality Meals and Options.

The full-service restaurant model of foodservice satisfies patients' desire for fresh ingredients, trend-forward options and customization.

Best practices for delivering restaurant-style dining services include:

- Made-to-order options, like omelets, pasta, sandwiches, pizza, Bento boxes and salads
- Ethnic cuisine, comfort foods and wholesome selections — including a menu rotation
- Variety to meet specialty diet restrictions, such as plant-based options alongside meat-based counterparts
- State-of-the-art meal delivery systems
- Dedicated hotlines to call for assistance, ask questions, make substitutions or request additional options

▶ 2. Deploy Systems for Real-Time Patient Feedback and Response.

To be satisfied, new moms must have a way to give feedback and know their questions, comments and concerns are heard. Mobile survey apps deliver real-time feedback, so healthcare administrators know how patients feel and can respond immediately.

Best practices in real-time patient feedback include:

- Remove manual patient satisfaction processes from a manager's workload. Allow them more time to spend on patient care and creating a relationship
 - Deploy technology-enabled feedback systems that allow patients to communicate about food services and EVS
 - Acknowledge patient feedback and act on it quickly, so patients gain an immediate benefit
 - Identify and address patients' nonclinical issues proactively, before they voice concerns to nurses or other clinical staff
-

▶ 3. Train Staff Members to Be Courteous and Friendly.

Continuity of care includes the overall friendliness and helpfulness of every single member of the hospital team. When staff members are courteous and helpful, patients feel more satisfied with their overall hospital experience.

Best practices in staff hospitality include:

- Train the staff members to be kind and cheerful and respond to any in-person patient requests
 - Train nutritional assistants to interact with patients and families about their meal options, delivery and special requests, and nutritional needs
-

▶ 4. Equip Nursing Staff to Handle New Mom Meal Requests

Most babies do not enter the world in time for their moms to have a meal on a typical timeframe. When they are famished after giving birth, it's natural to ask the nurses for a meal or snack.

Make it easy on the nursing staff to provide them with food options with these best practices:

- Keep unit kitchens stocked with extra trays, snacks and beverages for after-hours and between mealtime requests
- Respond promptly to patient and staff requests for additional or replacement meals and snacks
- Find ways to provide variety and appealing food choices, especially for long-term patients and those on restricted diets

"When I go into our kitchen to get something for the patient, it's stocked so I don't have to say: 'Oh, I'm sorry. I don't have any food for you right now. I know you just delivered your child and you're starving.' That definitely helps, actually being able to get food for them. Patients deliver at 2 a.m. and foodservice is closed, but they do a well-enough job of stocking us for nights that we don't normally have an issue."

[L&D Nurse](#)



BEST PRACTICE THREE

Improve Retail Dining Options

“Branded concepts, whether corporate brands or self-operated, offer diners familiar names, menu items, and a sense of place. This translates into more money spent and more diner loyalty for foodservice operators.”

[Foodservice Director](#)

New parents typically receive many visitors who want to meet the new baby. To make both the new parents and their visitors feel welcome and comfortable during at this joyous time requires flexible dining options.

Here are five best practices in retail dining:

▶ 1. Share Quality Dining Options with Guests.

Just like patients, guests also prefer dining options that meet their desire for healthy, delicious and customizable meals and snacks including:

Best practices for delivering restaurant-style dining services include:

- A variety of dining options — from café meals to grab-and-go snacks
- Customizable options — from sandwiches to omelets
- Flavor variety — such as ethnic meals and comfort foods
- Farm-to-table fresh and local ingredients
- Options that address diet restrictions, such plant-based meals
- Ordering a tray at mealtime to eat with new mothers

▶ 2. Provide Visitors with 24/7 Access to Food.

Babies don't arrive at convenient dining times. So new parents' visitors can arrive at any time of the night or day. Having access to convenient meals and snacks cannot only feed their hunger, but also help them spend more time with the parents and baby.

Best practices in providing convenient access to food around-the-clock include:

- Create easy access to food, drink and essentials your staff and visitors want through [on-site, scalable retail solutions](#)
- Offer self-pay kiosks with a range of food options, such as sandwiches, salads, fruit and beverages
- Add modern vending machines which provide convenient, healthy snack options

▶ 2. Provide Visitors with 24/7 Access to Food.

Babies don't arrive at convenient dining times. So new parents' visitors can arrive at any time of the night or day. Having access to convenient meals and snacks cannot only feed their hunger, but also help them spend more time with the parents and baby.

Best practices in providing convenient access to food around-the-clock include:

- Create easy access to food, drink and essentials your staff and visitors want through [on-site, scalable retail solutions](#)
 - Offer self-pay kiosks with a range of food options, such as sandwiches, salads, fruit and beverages
 - Add modern vending machines which provide convenient, healthy snack options
-

▶ 3. Offer Guests Brand-Name Options

Outside of hospital settings, consumers rely on local and national brand-name restaurants to fill their cravings with foods they love, meet their dietary needs or help them feel comforted. They appreciate when they have similar options in hospitals — enjoying the familiar names, menu items and sense of place. That's why many healthcare systems are installing brand-name food options in their cafes.

Best practices around brand-name dining options include:

- Look for national brands that are popular and give customers value
 - Create a food court-style design with different brands at each station
 - Aim for a variety, including international cuisine and healthy meals
-

▶ 4. Offer a Variety of Snack Options

Often hospital guests don't crave full meals, just snacks. Filling this craving goes a long way toward guest and patient satisfaction.

Best practices for guest snacking include:

- Create a convenience store-type venue with grab-and-go selections
 - Provide a wide variety of snack options, such as sandwiches, salads and beverages
-

▶ 5. Provide Innovative Food Delivery Venues

Delighting guests and patients involves thinking outside of the box to offer innovative ideas, such as unique food delivery venues. Hospitals can optimize guest and patient experiences by offering services such as coffee bars, smoothie stations and ice cream carts.



BEST PRACTICE FOUR

Improve Environmental Services Support

“True optimization entails developing deep and long-term relationships with patients.”

[Society of General Internal Medicine](#)

Following the birth of a baby, a parent's desire to protect their child becomes an unparalleled force. Like mama and papa bears, they want to protect their newborn from any threats. In hospitals, they want their rooms to be pristine — and to know their babies are in a safe and clean environment. To exceed these expectations, hospitals must establish a well-defined cleaning process and offer continual training to environmental services (EVS) staff.

Here are five best practices in EVS:

▶ 1. Clean Patient Rooms Efficiently.

Room cleanliness is critical to both prevent the spread of healthcare associated infections (HAIs) to newborns and to help patients feel comfortable and safe. Two advanced processes help achieve these goals:

Clean rooms in a systematic order.

A systematic cleaning protocol should include starting at the door, then cleaning the room from right to left, high to low and most soiled to most clean areas. This ensures the staff does not miss frequently touched areas (high-touch points) and does not disturb patients by crisscrossing the room.

Clean “high-touch” areas.

Patients and visitors touch certain surfaces more frequently than others. These “high touch” areas can become sources for HAIs. Identify these areas, such as door handles, remote controls, chair arms, bed rails and have an established cleaning protocol.

▶ 2. Train EVS Teams with Room Cleaning Protocols.

To ensure that front-line employees deliver optimal room cleanliness to labor and delivery patients, use these best practices:

- Have supervisor train EVS staff members using shoulder-to-shoulder teaching methods and explaining rationale for professional processes and tools utilized in a healthcare environment
- Train staff on systematic cleaning methodology
- Regularly observe EVS staff cleaning and engaging with patients

▶ 3. Leave Visual Cues in Clean Rooms

Patients are comforted by visual cues to communicate their room has been cleaned. For example, hotels use a variety of visual cues to showcase cleanliness, such as wrapping glasses in plastic and folding the ends of the toilet paper into V-shapes. Hospitals can adopt similar best practices in labor and delivery patient rooms, such as:

- Wrap the toilet seat with special bands of paper
 - Fold towels, especially in creative or whimsical patterns
 - Fold end of toilet paper roll into v-shape
 - Provide table tent with EVS service description and housekeeper signature
-

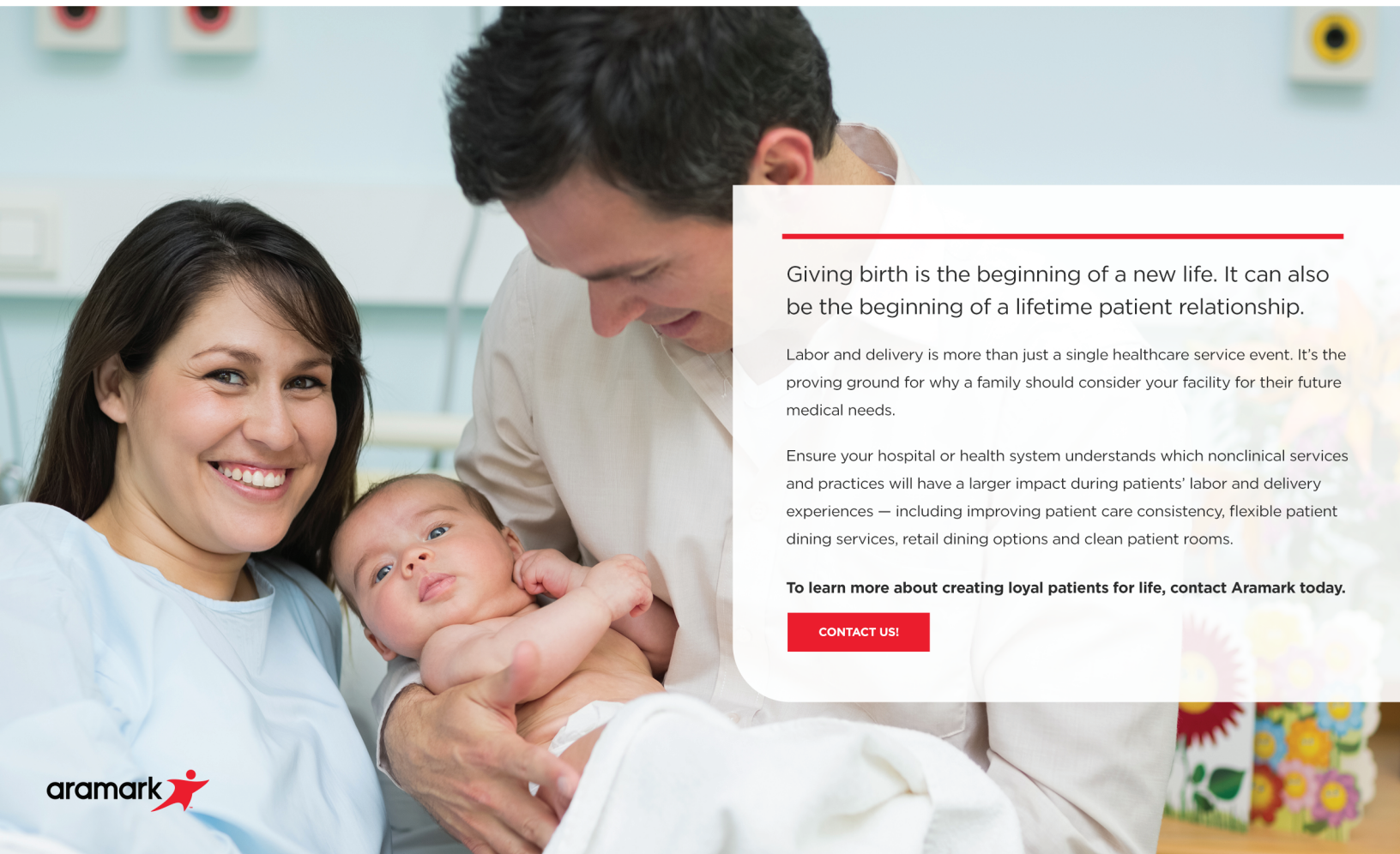
▶ 4. Train EVS Staff Members to be Visible and Friendly

The more positive EVS “touches” that labor and delivery patients receive, the higher their patient satisfaction. Ensure your EVS team members are friendly and visible, without being in the patient’s way.

A good best practice is to schedule outgoing and friendly employees strategically. Identify EVS staff members with engaging personalities and who connect well with patients, and staff them during peak patient-interaction hours.

▶ 5. Make EVS Teams Available for Special Requests

To ensure EVS staff members do not miss an opportunity to improve services, instruct them to ask patients for feedback into making their stay more comfortable. Positive engagement with a patient and their family



Giving birth is the beginning of a new life. It can also be the beginning of a lifetime patient relationship.

Labor and delivery is more than just a single healthcare service event. It's the proving ground for why a family should consider your facility for their future medical needs.

Ensure your hospital or health system understands which nonclinical services and practices will have a larger impact during patients' labor and delivery experiences — including improving patient care consistency, flexible patient dining services, retail dining options and clean patient rooms.

To learn more about creating loyal patients for life, contact Aramark today.

CONTACT US!