

Understanding Adoption After Birth: A Guide for Birth Parents in Tennessee

What Adoption After Birth Really Means

When you are pregnant and considering adoption, the timeline can feel overwhelming. Many people assume that once a child is born, the decision is final and the process is over. But the reality is more nuanced. Adoption after birth is a legal and emotional journey that continues for weeks and months after delivery. For birth parents in Murfreesboro and across Tennessee, knowing what happens after the baby arrives can bring clarity and reduce fear.

I have walked alongside dozens of birth parents through this process, and I can tell you that the period after birth is often the most intense part of the adoption experience. It is a time of careful decisions, legal steps, and deep emotions. Understanding the sequence of events can help you feel more in control.

The First Days: Hospital Plan and Initial Decisions

Before you go into labor, you will likely have a hospital plan. This document is not legally binding, but it outlines your wishes for the hospital stay. It can include who you want in the delivery room, whether you want time alone with the baby, and how you want to handle the first meeting with the adoptive family. The hospital plan is a practical tool that helps medical staff and the adoption agency respect your preferences.

In Tennessee, birth parents have the right to change their minds after the baby is born. The legal process of relinquishment does not happen at the hospital. You sign paperwork, but the adoption is not finalized until later. This waiting period exists for a reason. It gives you space to recover physically and emotionally before making a permanent decision.

During this time, the adoptive family may be nearby, but you control the contact. Some birth parents want to spend time alone with the baby. Others prefer the adoptive family to be present from the start. Both choices are valid. Your adoption agency, such as Destiny Adoption, can help coordinate communication so that your wishes are respected.



Legal Steps After Leaving the Hospital

Once you leave the hospital, the legal process begins in earnest. In Tennessee, birth parents cannot legally sign a surrender of parental rights until after the baby is born. Even then, the signing typically happens a few days later, and there is a revocation period afterward. This means you have time to reconsider. The exact length of the revocation period depends on the type of adoption and the circumstances.

During this stage, it is critical to have legal counsel. An attorney who specializes in adoption can explain your birth parent rights and answer questions about the adoption petition, relinquishment, and adoption finalization. You do not have to navigate this alone. Many adoption agencies in Tennessee provide access to independent legal representation for birth parents at no cost to you.

The adoption finalization hearing is the last major legal step. It happens months after the baby is placed with the adoptive family. At that hearing, a judge approves the adoption, and the adoptive family becomes the child's legal parents. For birth parents, this can be a bittersweet moment. It is the end of a long process, and it often brings a mix of relief and grief.

Types of Adoption: Open, Closed, and Private

One of the most important decisions you will make is the level of openness in the adoption. This choice affects your relationship with the child and the adoptive family for years to come.

- Open adoption means ongoing contact between birth parents and the adoptive family. This can include letters, photos, visits, or phone calls. The level of contact is agreed upon before placement and can be adjusted over time.
- Closed adoption means no contact after the adoption is finalized. Identifying information is sealed, and the child may not know the birth parents' names until they are an adult. Some birth parents choose this when they want a clean break or feel that contact would be too painful.
- Private adoption is arranged directly between birth parents and adoptive parents, sometimes with the help of a lawyer or facilitator rather than a full-service adoption agency. It can offer more control but also requires more self-advocacy.

Many birth parents in Murfreesboro choose open adoption because it allows them to stay connected to the child in some way. But there is no right answer. The best choice is the one that aligns with your long-term emotional health and your vision for your child's future.

The Role of the Birth Father

The birth father has legal rights too, and his involvement can affect the adoption process. In Tennessee, if the birth father is known, he must be notified of the adoption and given the opportunity to assert his parental rights. If he is willing to support the adoption, he can sign a voluntary relinquishment. If he opposes the adoption, the case may become more complicated.

If the birth father is unknown or unable to be located, the adoption agency and legal counsel will take steps to legally establish that he has been given proper notice. This protects the adoption from being challenged later. It is important to be honest with your adoption team about the birth father's identity and whereabouts so that the process can move forward on solid legal ground.



Emotional Support and Post-Placement Services

The months after placement can be the hardest. Many birth parents experience grief, guilt, and a sense of loss, even when they are confident in their decision. Post-placement support is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Most reputable adoption agencies, including Destiny Adoption, offer counseling services for birth parents after the adoption is finalized. These services can help you process your feelings and adjust to life after the placement.

Support groups are another valuable resource. Talking to other birth parents who have been through the same experience can reduce isolation. In Murfreesboro, there are local groups and online communities where you can share your story and hear from others. You do not have to face the aftermath alone.

Some birth parents also benefit from individual therapy with a counselor who understands adoption. This is especially helpful if you are struggling with anxiety, depression, or complicated grief. Your adoption agency can refer you to therapists who specialize in adoption-related issues.

Practical Considerations for Birth Parents

[Adoption after birth](#) involves paperwork, appointments, and deadlines. Here are a few practical things to keep in mind:

- Keep copies of every document you sign. This includes the hospital plan, the relinquishment form, and any agreements about post-placement contact.

- Stay in touch with your legal counsel. If you have questions about your rights or the timeline, ask sooner rather than later.
- If you are working with an adoption agency, ask about their post-placement support policies. Some agencies offer financial assistance for counseling or medical expenses for a period after the birth.

It is also wise to have a support system in place before the baby is born. This could be a trusted friend, a family member, or a counselor. The days after placement can be emotionally raw, and having someone to lean on makes a difference.

Being Matched with Adoptive Parents

Before the baby is born, you will likely go through the process of being matched with adoptive parents. This is a significant step. You will review profiles of waiting families, talk to them on the phone or in person, and decide who feels like the right fit. In Tennessee, birth parents have the right to choose the adoptive family. This is your decision, and you should take your time.



When you are matched, the adoptive family will typically wait for the baby's birth. They may travel to Murfreesboro or be local. During the hospital stay, they may be nearby but will follow your lead. After placement, the relationship evolves according to the openness agreement you have made.

Being matched with adoptive parents does not mean you have to go through with the adoption. You can change your mind at any point before signing the final relinquishment. The match is an

intention, not a contract.

Final Thoughts

Adoption after birth is a process that demands patience, self-awareness, and support. It is not a single event but a series of steps that unfold over time. For birth parents in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, the resources are there if you know where to look. Destiny Adoption and other local agencies can guide you through the legal and emotional landscape. And you are never alone in this. Many birth parents have walked this path before you and found a way forward that honors their love for their child and their own well-being.