**Newborn Eye Ointment**

According to Texas Law, A physician, nurse, midwife, or other person in attendance at childbirth shall apply, or cause to be applied, to the child's eyes a 0.5% ophthalmic erythromycin ointment in each eye within two hours after birth. This law provides for medical care for newborns to prevent neonatal conjunctivitis and complications such as blindness that may arise in the newborn through birth to a mother with untreated gonorrhea. It has been found to be ineffective in chlamydia. Go to
http://evidencebasedbirth.com/is-erythromycin-eye-ointment-always-necessary-for-newborns/
for a detailed study on ointment and risks and benefits.

Due to modern advancements in medicine that were not available in the 1800s when eye ointment was first introduced, infections may be treated upon onset without complications if treated early.

Risks of treatment include:

* Adverse effects include eye irritation and blurred vision, which may interfere with bonding
* Widespread use may contribute to the development of antibiotic resistant bacteria (Hedbert et al. 1990)
* Erythromycin is not 100% effective at preventing ON (it has a 20% failure rate) (Lund et al., 1987) It’s possible that care providers may not be watchful for ON because they assume the infant was “already treated,” but prophylaxis does not work all the time

Risks of refusal:

* Infection of eyes due to missed diagnosis of gonorrhea and possibly chlamydia
* Bacterial infection from vaginal canal during birth.

I have educated myself and understand the risks and benefits of prophylactic eye treatment with erythromycin. I refused the treatment required by law and do not hold the birth attendant liable for failure to apply ophthalmic erythromycin after the birth of my baby.

Client Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_DOB\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_EDD \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_