

Find Your Birth Time

by Laurence Hillman, PhD

For an astrological reading it is important to know your time of birth to the minute. For every four minutes that the time of birth is off, details in the chart can change by up to one degree. This can be quite significant. It is worth following all possible avenues to get an accurate birth time.

Here are the steps to follow to find your birth time:

1. Don't ask your mom

Contrary to what many people believe, mom's memory may be the last source to rely on. More often than not, her memory is off by several hours. But then again, she was busy giving birth to you! Only use Mom as a resource if she wrote it down.

2. Best source is the birth certificate

In the US there are two kinds of birth certificates:

Short Form: Notarized card with name, date of birth, little else and used to request a passport and other official documents; does not contain the birth time.

Long Form: Detailed, original certificate with time of birth noted. Usually available at county seat of birth. If this is unsuccessful, try the town, city or the state. Authorities store your birth information at the "Department of Vital Records" or "Birth and Death Records" or "Bureau (or Office) of Vital Records." Your local library has phone numbers to these places.

3. Research online

Vitalchek (www.vitalcheck.com) provides a service that will send you a birth certificate. Many government agencies have contracted with them and will no longer speak to you directly. Remember that you need to ask them for the birth certificate with the most information, not a short version. You will be speaking to an agent at a desk with an 800-number so insist they mark somewhere on the order "Long Version." It is sometimes called Birth Long or Birth Full. Otherwise you may waste your money with Vitalchek.

4. Other places to look

Birth times are often recorded in baby books, family bibles, birth announcements (sometimes re-printed in local newspapers), on hospital basinet cards, or in a parent's diary

5. Family lore

Often important family memories that coincided with an event become family lore. For instance, perhaps everyone in the family knows that Jack was born "just as the game started" or "as the sun was coming up over the horizon that day." Such events are researchable by an astrologer.

6. Contact the hospital

You can also contact the hospital where you were born, or track down the doctor who delivered you. Sometimes they have records. This may require writing a letter and may include a fee.

7. If no records are available

It is still possible to have an astrological reading. Certain parts of a typical reading fall away and we instead focus more on what we do have. I have done countless readings with no birth time available.

