

Where will my baby be born?



Where will I have my baby?

From the moment you find out that you are pregnant, you are faced with having to make many decisions about various things. This leaflet will help you to consider your options as to where you might like to give birth to your baby.

Can I choose where to have my baby?

You can have your baby wherever you chose but you should try and get as much information as possible before you make a choice. The choices available at Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust for women are:

- home
- hospital maternity unit (The Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton and the Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath)
- Crowborough Birthing Centre.

You will find our website www.mypregnancymatters.org.uk informative about these choices.

The main factors to consider about where to have your baby should be:

- safety, for you and your baby
- where you would feel most comfortable, relaxed and in control of your labour.

Why is being relaxed in labour so important?

The more relaxed you are in labour, the more likely you are to cope with your labour. Tension and stress affects the amount of pain that you will feel when in labour. Where you are at the time may have an effect on these emotions.

Is it safer for me to have a homebirth or a hospital birth?

Research suggests that if you are healthy and you have a straightforward pregnancy a homebirth is as safe as a hospital birth, even if it is your first baby. If you have an existing medical condition, previous complicated pregnancies or births, or problems during your current pregnancy then you will need to discuss the safety issues with your midwife who can advise you on the advantages and possible risks.

The national average for homebirth is 2% but at BSUH it is around 7% but has been as high as 12%. Home is more familiar to you; you can move around more freely, have support from whoever you chose and control the environment more. However, if you are reassured by the presence of medical teams and the option of a range of facilities, such as an epidural, hospital could be the better option for you.

What are the advantages of having my baby at home?

- You feel more relaxed, comfortable and in control at home and are less likely to require pharmacological pain relief (you can use 'gas and air' at home)
- a midwife will give you one to one care during your active labour
- you can choose who is with you and what you want more freely
- you can use the water pool for labour and birth at home
- if you had a previous delivery that was quick, a planned home birth takes the worry about getting to the hospital 'in time' and you also avoid an often stressful journey to the unit.

What are the disadvantages of having my baby at home?

- You would have to transfer into hospital if you wanted further pain relief such as an epidural, which cannot be given at home
- if any complications occur during labour your midwife would advise you to go into hospital. This is usually by ambulance which can be uncomfortable and distressing
- if the unit is busy or more than one homebirth is occurring a midwife may not be able to attend you immediately and you may be requested to come into hospital for assessment.

What are the most important things I need to know about having a home birth?

(See separate Home Birth leaflet for full details).

If you decide to have a homebirth your midwife will discuss what to expect with you. She will give you all the information about the equipment you will need to supply, what the midwife can bring to your home and answer any question you might have about things like hiring a birthing pool. She will also inform you about what will happen if complications occur. It is possible you will need to be transferred into the hospital during your labour.

The most common reasons to go into hospital are due to concerns about the baby or that your labour is taking longer than expected. You may also request to be transferred in if you would like stronger pain relief, gas and air is the only analgesia that that midwife brings to a home birth.

Sometimes it is necessary to go into hospital after your baby has been born, either because your midwife is concerned about the baby or there are concerns about you. If you need to come into hospital from your home birth you will be transferred by ambulance with your midwife.

What should I do if I want to have my baby at home and there is a clinical reason which may prevent my labour from being straightforward?

Women will be supported to make a fully informed choice about their place of birth. In this circumstance your midwife will arrange a meeting with you and your partner, a supervisor of midwives and herself. A plan of care will be discussed which will be unique to you as to what has been agreed between you all about your labour. This will be kept in your hospital notes so that whoever is looking after you in labour is aware of what has been agreed. You will be given a copy of the notes made from this discussion.

What are the advantages of having my baby in hospital?

- Both Maternity Units within the BSUH Trust are Consultant Units which means they have a range of facilities available. Women with known childbirth complications will be given the appropriate medical support
- emergency support is available for both you and your baby if problems develop
- medical support is available for your baby, unless your baby is less than 34 weeks when you go into labour at the Princess Royal Hospital, as the Special Care Baby Unit is not equipped to care for very pre-term babies. Most of these babies are transferred to the Royal Sussex County Hospital, which has intensive care cots for small babies.

What are the disadvantages of having my baby in hospital?

- Unfamiliar environment, staff and routines may cause stress which may affect your labour progress
- the water pool may not be available to you if already in use

- you are more likely to need and use pain relief
- continuous monitoring of your baby is more likely and this may restrict your mobility and positions during labour
- you may not know the midwife who is caring for you and during busy times you may not receive one to one care.

Can I have my baby in a birth centre (midwifery-led unit)?

BSUH doesn't yet have a Midwifery-Led Unit. However Crowborough Birthing Centre is a six bedded small unit run by a team of experienced midwives from East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust. They offer ante-natal care and a choice of birth options in a home from home atmosphere and after your baby is born there are six post natal beds to relax in after the birth.

During labour in a non-urgent situation women may be transferred to the maternity unit they have booked their pregnancy with. If it is urgent you will be transferred to the nearest obstetric unit.

When do I have to decide?

It is an important decision to make about where to have your baby. You do not have to decide before a certain time and you can even wait until when you are in labour (you may have been booked to have a home birth but decide you would prefer to go into hospital once your labour actually starts). If you have a strong desire either way it helps to make the decision around 34 weeks pregnant, this means that you can start to make plans (hire pools for home births, arrange child care for older children etc and in the case of Crowborough Birthing Centre, arrangements for your care can be made.

Please talk to your midwife during your pregnancy as she can provide advice and written information about all your options.

If you would like to speak to a midwife about the information in this leaflet, please contact your named community midwife or contact labour ward. BSUH NHS Trust also has a Homebirth Support Group. Please ask your midwife for further details or a leaflet.

Royal Sussex County Hospital

Eastern Road
Brighton
BN2 5BE
Telephone: 01273 696955 Ext. 4373

Princess Royal Hospital

Lewes Road
Haywards Heath
RH16 4EX
Telephone: 01444 441881 Ext. 8484

Crowborough Birthing Unit

Southview Road
Crowborough
East Sussex
TN6 1HB
Telephone: 01892 654080

Useful Addresses

AIMS – Association for Improvements in Maternity Services

5 Ann's Court, Grove Road, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 4BE
Telephone: 0870 7651433 www.aims.org.uk

National Childbirth Trust

Alexandra House, Oldham Terrace, Acton, London W3 6NH
Telephone: 0870 4448707 www.nct.org.uk

Other Sources of Information:

Nursing and Midwifery Council www.nmc-uk.org

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG)

Homebirths – RCOG and RCM joint statement No.2 April 2007

www.rcog.org.uk/womens-health/clinical-guidance/home-births

National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE)

'Understanding NICE guidance: Care of women and their babies during labour.'
www.nice.org.uk/CG055

If you do not understand this leaflet, we can arrange for an interpreter.

إذا كنت لا تستطيع فهم محتويات هذه النشرة فيمكننا عمل الترتيبات لتوفير مترجم شفوي لك.

এই প্রচারপুস্তিকাকাটি যদি আপনি বুঝতে না পারেন, তবে আপনার জন্য আমরা একজন অনুবাদকের ব্যবস্থা করে দিতে পারি

如你不明白本單張的內容，我們可安排口譯員服務。

如你不明白本传单的内容，我们可安排口译员服务。

اگر مندرجات این جزوه را نمیفهمید، ما می‌توانیم مترجم در اختیارتان بگذاریم.

Jeśli masz trudności w zrozumieniu tej ulotki, możemy zorganizować tłumacza.

Disclaimer

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.