

Congratulations on your pregnancy!

Now that you are expecting, you will be thinking about your options and choices for your new arrival.

We can support you to have your baby at home, in the hospital on the delivery suite, or in one of our midwifery-led birth centres, which are fully equipped and operational on both sites.

Why choose a Birth Centre to give birth?

Women who experience pregnancy without complications are far more likely to achieve a normal, natural birth in a homely environment without the need for technical equipment and medical intervention.

Our experienced, compassionate staff will work with you to help achieve a natural birth, respectfully considering individualised care plans and working in partnership to provide choice and continuity of care.

This philosophy of care is best practice for low risk women, and can reduce the need for interventions.

Our birth centres are wonderful, calm environments, with all rooms complete with birthing pools, adjustable lighting, en-suite bathrooms and specially-designed seating areas.

Both sites are comfortably furnished with birthing couches and giant bean bags and padded matting. We have birthing pools for hydrotherapy, relaxing lighting and music stations as well as birthing balls and stools. The rooms are designed to create a tranquil and relaxing environment to promote calmness and progress of labour, where a woman's natural hormones, will help the labour as nature intended. A relaxing environment like this helps women avoid an adrenalin release which has the effect of inhibiting natural labour.

Our expert midwives will support women who are practising hypnobirthing techniques, using the birthing pools, using massage, and breathing techniques during labour. These all help relaxation and promote the production of the body's natural pain killers, endorphins. In addition, you are welcome to use TENS (Trans Electrical Nerve Stimulation) which is available on hire from the Trust, or Entonox (gas and air) which is readily available in all the birth rooms.



Who can use the Birth Centres?

We welcome all women who would like to give birth in a natural, home-from-home environment, although there are certain criteria that you need to meet:

- You are otherwise healthy with no known medical conditions
- Your pregnancy is not complicated by any obstetric conditions
- You go into labour at full term, between 37 and 42 weeks of pregnancy
- You are not expecting twins or multiples
- Your labour starts spontaneously

For the safety of all women and babies, women who have had a previous complicated pregnancy or birth may not be suitable to use the birth centre, although an individualised plan may be an available option. Please discuss with your midwife if you have any questions about your suitability to give birth in the midwife-led unit.

*"Giving birth here was fantastic and we'd highly recommend it to anyone."
The Richmonds*



What would happen in the event of an emergency?

The likelihood of an emergency situation occurring in a woman who is experiencing a low-risk pregnancy is extremely rare. Women and families can be reassured that all our midwives working in the birth centres are experienced practitioners, trained and skilled to react and manage all emergencies in childbirth.

Both midwife-led units are situated in close proximity to the delivery suite where women would be transferred as necessary should a situation change, or according to women's wishes, if an epidural was requested for example.

What happens after the birth?

If all remains well with you and your baby, you could be home around six hours after the birth. Should you need to stay for observations or feeding support, we can accommodate you on our postnatal ward and do also have amenity rooms available.

Please ask your midwife to check the amenity room availability and prices after baby arrives.



What should I bring with me?

Prepare your hospital bag as discussed at antenatal class or with your midwife. We would recommend that you bring a variety of easily digested snacks and isotonic drinks for energy. Bananas, cereal bars and smoothies are a good choice.

You're welcome to bring cushions and music of your choice to create that home-from-home feeling.

If you will be using the pool you may wish to bring something comfortable to wear such as a tankini or big t-shirt. It is also a good idea to bring a dressing gown as it will help to keep you warm after you get out of the pool.

Where can I find more information?

To book a tour in either of our Birth Centres please contact:

- 020 8296 2050 (St Helier Hospital)
- 01372 735205 (Epsom Hospital)

More information, of our maternity department and the Birth Centres, can be found at www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk/maternity.

You can also follow us on Twitter (@epsom_sthelier) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/epsomsthelier).

We look forward to seeing you soon!

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*Great care to every patient,
every day*

