

## Considering a home birth with us?

Overall, within the UK giving birth is very safe, for both you and your baby. Whatever environment you choose to give birth to your baby the safety of you both is our top priority.

We have tried to answer some frequently asked questions in this guide. If you would like more information, please ask your community midwife who will be happy to help.

### What are the benefits of home birth?

- Increases your chance of having a normal delivery
- Reduces the risk of intervention- such as a forceps delivery, emergency caesarean or episiotomy
- More likely to know the midwife caring for you
- Be in your own environment and remain as comfortable as possible throughout labour and immediately after your baby is born.

### Who is best suited to a homebirth?

- Women who have a low risk pregnancy, and have had a baby before without complications are ideal for a homebirth.
- The research surrounding homebirth has found it is safe for healthy women, with no complications birthing between 37 - 42 weeks pregnant (Birthplace study, 2011).
- For those who have had a baby before, there was no difference found in birth outcomes for mother or baby between those giving birth at home, or in a hospital.

### What pain relief is available at home?

- Water- Water birth is a highly popular pain relief choice in labour
- TENS machine- This is a small machine you can place on your back which sends small electrical impulses. It can be beneficial in the early stages of labour. You can buy these in high street shops, pharmacies and online
- Paracetamol- Simple oral pain relief
- Codeine- a stronger oral pain relief
- Gas and Air (Entonox) – Midwives will bring this to your home when you are in labour, it is a breathable pain relief, which works whilst you are continuously breathing it in, and comes out of your system within a minute when you stop.

### What if it is my first baby?

If it is your first baby and you have a low risk pregnancy, we will support you in your choice to have your baby at home. The majority of first time mums having their baby at home have a very positive experience. However, the Birthplace study did find there is a slightly higher (although overall still low) chance of complications for babies born to first time mums at home, rather than in hospital. 0.9% of babies born at home had a serious complication, compared to 0.5% born in the hospital.

### What if I am considered high risk?

If you have a complicated pregnancy, we would recommend you birth in the hospital. However, individualised home birth plans can be created following a discussion of the risks with your midwife, and a consultant obstetrician. We aim to support all women in their place of birth choice.

### Who will be at my home birth?

In Harrogate the homebirth service is supported by a dedicated team of community, and continuity midwives. This means having your baby at home increases the chances that you will be cared for by a midwife you already know. These midwives work in an on call model; it is a 24 hours service, running 7 days a week. One midwife will care for you in labour, and a second midwife will be present for when your baby is being born. Homebirths are a wonderful experience for students, so with your consent they may also be present.

Occasionally the on call midwife may be unavailable and the service suspended, for example if they are with another woman in labour. This is unusual, however in these scenarios we would ask you to come into the hospital for your labour. We may also ask you to come into hospital if it is difficult for the midwives to safely reach you, e.g. in severe weather conditions. We will always try to accommodate all planned homebirths but if this is not possible, we will ensure that a home from home environment is created for you within the maternity unit.

### Why might I need to go into hospital?

The midwives caring for you in labour are very skilled at identifying any deviation from normal labour and will discuss this with you. Sometimes for the safety of you and your baby transfer into hospital is recommended. They would organise for transfer into hospital via ambulance. The table below shows the most common reasons for transfer.

*Taken from: Your Choice Where to have your baby, 2018*

The Birthplace study (2011) found:

- Around 45 out of 100 first time mums were transferred into hospital during or shortly after the labour
- Around 12 out of 100 second time mums were transferred into hospital during or shortly after the labour

Main reason for transfer from planned place of birth to an obstetric unit	From home	From a freestanding midwifery unit	From an alongside midwifery unit
Delay in labour (any stage)	32.4%	37.1%	35.2%
Concerns about fetal heart rate	7.0%	10.5%	10.8%
Request for epidural	5.1%	6.6%	13.3%
Meconium	12.2%	12.2%	12.2%
Retained placenta	7.0%	7.3%	4.6%
For stitches	10.9%	7.5%	8.4%
Neonatal concerns (after birth)	5.2%	2.6%	(less than 0.1%)
Other	20.1%	16.2%	16.3%

This table is derived from recommendation 1.1.7 of NICE CG190 (2014) figures for all healthy women (those having their first baby and those who have had a baby before) and is taken from the Birthplace Study.

### Booking a homebirth

If you are interested in having a homebirth, please discuss this with your midwife. They will organise to come to your home to discuss homebirths with you and your family. They will complete a homebirth assessment with you. This includes looking at where in your home might be suitable to give birth to your baby, what equipment you may need, the process for calling a midwife in labour and help you think about your birth preferences.

You will be offered some additional checks when booking a homebirth, including a scan to confirm your baby is head down after 36 weeks, and a blood test to check your iron levels are adequate. This is to ensure your birth is as safe as possible.

### Hiring a homebirth pool

Many women find being in water a relaxing experience, particularly during labour where it can be an effective pain relief option. Thanks to charitable donations, we are able to offer a discounted birthing pool hire service at Harrogate Hospital.

- In order for the pools to be used most effectively we only take reservations from 34 weeks gestation. Payment and deposit will be required on collection of the pool (between 36-37 weeks). Prior to collecting and paying for your pool hire you will have had a home visit from your midwife as part of the routine homebirth booking process
- The pool will be collected from your home when your baby is 5 days old (6 week maximum hire)
- The payment required for hire is £100. £50 hire fee (including pool, inflation/deflation pump and disposable liners) and a £50 refundable deposit in case of damages
- The £50 fee is non-refundable if the liner has been opened, whether the pool was used in labour or not.

**If you are interested in hiring a pool please call the community midwifery office on 01423 553051, alternatively email [hdfc.communitymidwives@nhs.net](mailto:hdfc.communitymidwives@nhs.net) once you are 34 weeks, when we will be able to advise you of availability and confirm your reservation.**



## Checklist

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Birth plan</i>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Pain relief options: TENS, Waterbirth pool, paracetamol etc.</i>             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Hot water bottle</i>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Lots of towels</i>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Large absorbent pads (Like puppy pads)</i>                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Waterproof mat to protect floor (E.g. shower curtain or oil table cloth)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Battery powered lights (No naked flames)</i>                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Birth affirmations</i>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Music or hypnobirthing tapes</i>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Food and drink</i>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Camera</i>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Hospital bag in case of transfer to hospital</i>                             |

If you are **concerned about yourself or your baby** please call MAC (8am-8pm) or Labour ward to ensure a quick response:

MAC: **01423 557531**. Labour ward: **01423 553184**

**Other useful numbers:**

- Community Midwifery Office on 01423 553051
- Antenatal Clinic: 01423 553010
- Pannal Ward (antenatal + postnatal ward): 01423 553157

References:

<https://assets.nhs.uk/prod/documents/NHSE-your-choice-where-to-have-baby-first-baby-sept2018.pdf>

<https://assets.nhs.uk/prod/documents/NHSE-your-choice-where-to-have-baby-baby-before-sept2018.pdf>

<https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/birthplace/results>