Choosing where to have your baby

All women and birthing people have the right to choose where they give birth to their baby. We will support you in your choice.

Your midwife, and doctor if you have one, will offer recommendations on where may be the safest place for you and your baby based on your individual health and pregnancy needs.

You may want to discuss options that are outside of these recommendations too.

You do not need to book your place of birth in advance, but it is useful to discuss this with your midwife during pregnancy.

This leaflet aims to share information about your place of birth options if you are having pregnancy care with the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital (NNUH).

Making Decisions About Your Care

When you need to make a decision about your care your doctor or midwife are required to give you all of the information you need to help you make a decision that is right for you. This is called Informed consent.

- Your choices will depend on your personal history and circumstances.
- Your care should be personalised to your needs.
- You should have time to ask questions.
- Have an open discussion before making any decisions.
- It is not ok to feel pressured into making a decision.
- Risks should be explained in a way that makes sense to you e.g. 1:100 or 1%
- You can ask for someone to support you or advocate for you in discussions.
- You can ask for a second opinion.

BRAIN can help you ask questions

B Benefits

What are the benefits? For me? For my baby?
Are there any benefits of not doing this?

R Risks

What are the risks this is trying to prevent?
What are the risks of doing this?

A Alternatives

Is there anything else we could try instead?

I Intuition

How do I feel about this?

N Nothing

Can this wait?
What happens if I choose to do nothing?

Decision Making Checklist

- ✓ Accurate and up to date information
- ✓ Easy to understand information
- ✓ Ask for more information if needed
- ✓ Ask for more time if needed
- ✓ Feel free to discuss with your support network before deciding

Whatever you decide the doctors and midwives will support and care for you

Each month we hold Birth Choices meets where you can meet with midwives from the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital to discuss your options for birthing your baby. Please ask your community midwife for details.

Home Birth

Home birth allows you to birth in the comfort and privacy of your own home. Birthing at home supports the natural labour process and reduces intervention. Care is provided by midwives from the Juniper home birth team.

You are able to design your birth space exactly how you want, with your own music, scents and lighting to make you feel comfortable and relaxed. You may opt to hire a pool.

Considerations

- There is a dedicated home birth team who provide 1-to-1 care in labour.
- Research shows that home birth is as safe as hospital birth for 'low risk' pregnancies.
- You are more likely to have met the midwife who cares for you in labour.
- You can hire a pool if you would like a water birth.
- There are no limits on birth partners.
- Your children can be present if you choose, or stay in bed at nightime.
- You can move around your home and eat and drink freely.
- There is an aromatherapy service.
- You do not need a large space or certain type of home for a home birth.
- You will be offered intermittent monitoring of your baby's heart beat.
- You are more likely to have a straightforward birth without interventions than in a hospital.
- If you need emergency treatment, some of this can be provided at home.
- If complications arise you may be recommended transfer by ambulance to the hospital. This means it will take longer to access specialist care or equipment than for those birthing in the hospital.

Recommended to:

- Planning a vaginal birth.
- Labour between 37 and 42 weeks.
- Maximum of three previous births.
- Singleton pregnancy.
- BMI under 35 at start of pregnancy.
- Baby is in the 'head down' position.
- If waters have broken, the water is clear and has broken less than 24hrs ago.
- No complications that are likely to affect labour or baby at birth.
- Normal iron levels (Hb over 95g/l).

Midwife Led Birthing Unit

The Midwife Led Birthing Unit (MLBU) provides a less clinical environment whilst being close to all the facilities offered by Delivery Suite. Care is provided by midwives who focus on maximising the chances of a straightforward birth.

The MLBU has four birth rooms with en suite bathrooms and three birthing pools. Rooms have light projectors, bean bags and birthing mattresses.

Considerations

- You will receive 1-to-1 support from a midwife in established labour.
- There is an aromatherapy service.
- There is specialist equipment for active birth such as mats, beanbags, birth balls and birthing stools.
- You can have two adult birth partners with you.
- Your birth partners have access to hot drink making facilities.
- You will have a private room and bathroom.
- There are three birthing pool rooms. and midwives are experienced in supporting waterbirth regularly.
- You will be offered intermittent monitoring of your baby's heart beat.
- You are more likely to have a straightforward birth without interventions than on a Delivery Suite.
- If complications arise you may be recommended to transfer to the Delivery Suite. There is a short distance between MLBU and DS which can mean a short delay in accessing medical treatment.

Recommended to:

- Planning a vaginal birth.
- Labour between 37 and 42 weeks.
- Maximum of three previous births.
- Singleton pregnancy.
- BMI under 35 at start of pregnancy.
- Baby is in the 'head down' position.
- If waters have broken, the water is clear and has broken less than 24hrs ago.
- No complications that are likely to affect labour or baby at birth.
- Normal iron levels (Hb over 95g/l).

Delivery Suite

The Delivery Suite is the obstetric unit at NNUH. On delivery suite you have access to additional medical support, monitoring, equipment and pain relief options. Care is provided by a team of midwives and doctors who specialise in complex births.

Delivery Suite has 13 birthing rooms with en suite bathrooms, one which has a birthing pool. There are projector lights and birthing balls available to use.

Considerations

On Delivery Suite:

- You will receive 1-2-1 support from a midwife in established labour
- There is one birthing pool available.
- When in established labour you will have a private room and bathroom.
- You can have two adult birth partners
- The environment may feel more clinical.
- There is an option to access the aromatherapy service.
- There is specialist equipment for active birth such as mats and birth balls.
- You are more likely to have an epidural, episiotomy, forceps, ventouse or caesarean birth.

There is direct access to:

- Obstetricians (doctors who specialise in birth) if your labour becomes complicated.
- Anaesthetists, who provide stronger pain relief like epidural and remifentanil, and provide care in theatre.
- Neonatal doctors and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).
- Medical interventions, such as assisted birth (ventouse/forceps).
- A wider range of medications and medical equipment.
- Continuous or intermittent monitoring of your baby's heart beat.
- Operating Theatres if needed during labour or after birth.

Recommended to:

- Twins and multiple pregnancies.
- BMI of 35 or more at start of pregnancy.
- Baby is not in 'head down' position.
- For some medical conditions, like high blood pressure.
- Labour before 37 weeks or after 42 weeks of pregnancy.
- Your baby is expected to be very small or very large.
- You are having your 5th or more baby.
- Some previous birth complications, like very heavy bleeding or caesarean birth.
- If your labour is complex and needs medical support.

Theatre

Operating theatre is where your baby is born if you have a planned or unplanned caesarean birth, or an assisted birth using forceps or ventouse to help with the birth of your baby. Care is provided by a team of doctors, midwives and theatre staff.

There are two **operating theatres, one anaesthetic room and a shared recovery area with privacy curtains within Delivery Suite.**

Considerations

- You will be supported by a team of doctors, midwives, nurses, anaesthetists and theatre staff.
- The theatre environment is bright and there may be up to 10 people present.
- One birth partner can be present with you in theatre.
- If you have a general anaesthetic (put to sleep) your birth partner won't be in theatre during the birth of your baby.
- An anaesthetist can provide pain relief such as an epidural, a spinal block or a general anaesthetic.
- You will have support from a midwife who will discuss your birth preferences with you.
- Not all ventouse or forceps births take place in theatre, some happen in a delivery suite room.
- You may be transferred to the operating theatre if you experience complications after birth.

Recommended to:

- Planned (Elective) caesarean birth.
- Unplanned (Emergency) caesarean birth.
- Forceps birth.
- Ventouse birth.
- Complex births where specialist teams and equipment are required

Coping Methods and Pain Relief

There are many options for coping with labour and birth, including medication that is safe in pregnancy.

This chart shows your options in each place of birth. The alternative methods are not medically recommended, these would need to be provided by yourself. For home birth, you would need to supply your own pool/TENS if choosing these.

You are able to bring in 'home comforts' such as a pillow, a music player and your favourite snacks and drinks if birthing in the hospital.

	Home Birth	MLBU	Delivery Suite	Operating Theatre
Alternative methods, self directed, such as: Massage, Hypnobirthing, Acupressure/comb, Breathing techniques	✓	✓	✓	✓
TENS	✓	✓	✓	
Birth Pool	✓	✓	✓	
Paracetamol	✓	✓	✓	✓
Entonox (Gas and Air)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oral Morphine (Oramoph)	✓	✓	✓	
Pethidine Injection		✓	✓	
Remifentanil			✓	
Epidural			✓	✓
Spinal Block				✓
General Anaesthetic				✓

NNUH Maternity Department Webpages
The NNUH website provides information on services available at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital Maternity Unit.

Personalised Care and Support Plan
Your Personalised Care and Support Plan will help you to explore, understand and record your individual choices for pregnancy, birth and the first weeks of parenthood.

