

# Home birth

## Maternity Department Patient Information Leaflet



## Introduction

The Dudley community midwives are happy to support you to give birth to your baby at home. Ideally, to be considered for a home birth, you will have:

- Been assessed by your midwife as low risk. This is where your midwife considers your general health, any previous pregnancies and birth history to mean that you will probably have a low risk birth.
- A body mass index (BMI) of less than 35.
- Completed 37 full weeks of pregnancy with no complications. Any complications will be discussed with you by your midwife or an obstetrician (pregnancy doctor).
- You should be no more than 12 days past your due date.

Your community midwife will assess you throughout your pregnancy to ensure you remain suitable for a home birth. A home visit will be arranged after 34 weeks of pregnancy with a community midwife to assess the suitability of your home environment for a home birth and/or water birth.

## What do I need for a home birth?

- A protective covering for carpets or bedding, for example, a shower curtain or plastic decorating sheet
- Large bin bags for rubbish
- Old sheets
- Plenty of towels including four towels for the baby
- A crib, moses basket or cot made up ready for baby
- A bag packed for you and baby in case you need to go into hospital
- Enough space to move around safely
- A quiet, relaxed atmosphere and anything that will create a calm environment such as music, soft lights, massage oil

- A supportive birth partner
- Drinks and healthy food and snacks for you and your birth partner(s)
- Childcare for any other children when you go into labour
- Easy access to your property with nearby parking
- For a water birth: a mirror, torch and a waterproof thermometer to ensure that water temperature is maintained

## What do I do when I go into labour?

When you begin labour you must contact:

**Community midwives 01384 244358 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)**

or

**Russells Hall Hospital switchboard 01384 456111 at any other time**

When calling, please say that you are booked for a home birth and a community midwife will return your call. Please note: this may not be your named/usual community midwife. The community midwife will ask about your labour and discuss a plan of care with you. A home visit may be arranged for you.

It is quite common for your waters to break before you begin labour. If this happens, please call the community midwives and let them know what time this happened.

Once the waters have broken, there is a small risk of infection to you and your baby. Therefore, if you are not established in labour (regular, rhythmic contractions lasting more than 45 seconds) within 18 hours, we would recommend that your labour is induced and will ask you to attend the Maternity Unit. This will be arranged for you by a community midwife.

After the midwife has assessed you at home, if you are in early labour and all is well with you and baby, the midwife will often leave you and come back when labour is established. A second midwife will be called nearer to the birth.

If your initial visit is during the night, two midwives will attend. Occasionally, there are some circumstances where they will be unable to provide your care, for example, if they are with another woman in labour. You may then be asked to go to hospital for assessment or delivery.

Midwives are experts in normal labour but if any problems occur during labour, your midwife will discuss these with you. If admission to hospital is necessary, an ambulance will transfer you and your baby to hospital and your midwife will go with you.

## **What pain relief can I have?**

For self-help techniques in early labour, please ask your midwife for a copy of the 'Am I in labour?' patient information leaflet.

During a home birth, your midwife will be able to give you Entonox (gas and air).

A birthing pool can be a great form of pain relief and can be used at home but it has to be supplied by you. If you choose to hire a birthing pool, your birth partner will be responsible for setting it up and maintaining the water temperature. If you would like to hire a birthing pool to use at home, please let your midwife know during one of your antenatal appointments.

The midwife does not provide alternative methods of pain relief such as aromatherapy or reflexology but will support you, if you have your own knowledge about these and want to use them.

## **What happens after the birth?**

After the baby and the placenta have been delivered and the necessary checks have been made, you and your family can spend time together while the necessary paperwork is completed.

The midwives will stay with you as long as required to make sure you receive the care you need. The midwives will arrange your next visit and leave you emergency and support contact numbers.

Your baby will receive a full examination within 72 hours of the birth by a midwife who is qualified to do this.

If you have an RhD negative blood type and require anti-D immunoglobulin injections, your community midwife will arrange these for you. These will be given in the Maternity Unit at Russells Hall Hospital.

Your GP and health visitor will be informed of the birth of your baby.

## Can I find out more?

The following websites have more information about home births:

<http://www.which.co.uk/birth-choice/environments/home?gclid=ClqZzODrnr0CFWXnwgod6B0Acw>

<http://www.homebirth.org.uk/>

<http://www.nct.org.uk/birth-topics/home-birth>

[https://www.nct.org.uk/sites/default/files/related\\_documents/Home%20birth%20booklet\\_8.pdf](https://www.nct.org.uk/sites/default/files/related_documents/Home%20birth%20booklet_8.pdf)

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Community midwives on 01384 456111 ext. 3358 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/maternity/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [dgft.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:dgft.patient.information@nhs.net)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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