



PATIENT INFORMATION

# CHOOSING WHERE TO HAVE YOUR BABY



At Worcester Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, we know that choosing where to have your baby is a big decision. This leaflet will help you decide the right place for you to give birth. Throughout your pregnancy your community midwife will give you the opportunity to talk about where you can have your baby.

At Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust we are pleased to be able to offer you 3 choices for where you can have your baby:

- Home
- Meadow Birth Centre (Along Side Midwifery Unit)
- Delivery Suite (Obstetric Unit)

If you and your baby are healthy and at low risk of complications (and you have not had a baby by caesarean section before), planning to have your baby in a midwifery led birth centre or at home may be ideal for you. Until recently, most babies were born in a hospital delivery suite but we now know that this may not an ideal environment for *all* women to give birth in. However, giving birth on the delivery suite is recommended if you or your baby have any health conditions or known problems.

This leaflet will help you decide which birth place is best for you and your baby and why this choice is so important

### **Home birth**

Choosing to have your baby at home may be a good option if you want to give birth naturally in a place that is familiar to you. Being at home to have your baby means you are in a place where you already feel comfortable which may help you feel relaxed and more able to cope with labour. Home birth is generally recommended for women who are having a straightforward pregnancy. If you think that a homebirth might be the right choice for you, please speak with your community midwife.

### **Why chose a Home Birth?**

Two midwives will be with you at your home when you have your baby. The first midwife will be with you throughout your labour and another midwife will come to your home when the baby is about to be born.

The Birth Place Study (2011) found women planning a homebirth:

- Are more likely to have a normal birth and less likely to need a caesarean section or instrumental birth
- Are less likely to need strong pain medication (i.e. epidural)
- Are less likely to have an episiotomy (cut at vaginal opening)

- Can have additional birth supporters and family can be with you throughout your labour and birth
- May be more relaxed in your own home and move around more freely making labour and birth more comfortable
- Have continuity of care with a midwife during your labour and birth
- Hire a pool to assist you with managing your labour
- Midwives will give you on-going support with feeding your baby

**If this is your second or subsequent baby:**

The Birth Place Study (2011) found that if you have an uncomplicated pregnancy home birth is just as safe as having your baby on the obstetric unit (delivery suite). The risk of your baby having problems during or immediately after birth were found to be the same at home as on the obstetric unit (delivery suite) or birth centre (5 babies in 1000).

If you any complications arise during the birth or immediately after it, the midwife will arrange for you to be transferred to the Worcester Royal Hospital. This is generally by ambulance. The chance of a transfer to the obstetric unit is about 12%.

**If this is your first baby:**

If you are having your first baby at home, there is a slightly higher chance of the baby having problems during birth (9 babies/1000 at home vs 5 babies/1000 in obstetric unit/labour ward).

If complications arise during your labour or birth your midwife will arrange for a transfer to Worcester Royal Hospital. This is generally by ambulance. A midwife will go with you when you are transferred. The chance of transfer for first time mothers is around 45%.

**Meadow Birth Centre**

**Why choose a Birth Centre?**

A recent study (Birthplace 2011) has shown that having a baby is generally very safe. Planning to have your baby in a midwifery led birth centre is just as safe for healthy women, low risk women and babies as planning to have your baby on a traditional labour ward.

## **The study also found that by planning to have your baby on a birth centre you will have:**

- increased chance of having a normal birth
- increased opportunity to move around in labour
- access to birth pools for supporting you with labour
- less medical interventions
- less likely to have forceps or caesarean section
- less likely to need strong pain relief (such as epidurals)
- continuity of care with a midwife during your labour and birth

If things do not go as planned you will be transferred to the main obstetric unit (delivery suite). For first time mothers the chance of transfer is around 40% and for mothers having their subsequent baby the chance is about 13%.

## **What is the Meadow Birth Centre?**

The Meadow Birth Centre at the Worcester Royal Hospital is located near the labour ward. Our Birth Centre is run by experienced midwives who specialise in low risk care in pregnancy and birth. The Meadow Birth Centre is an along-side midwifery led unit, which means that it is located near to the delivery suite.

At the Meadow Birth Centre our midwives take responsibility for your care during labour and support you to have a normal birth. If you or your baby need specialist medical care or you decide to have an epidural for pain relief, you will be transferred, either by walking, bed or wheelchair, to the obstetric unit (delivery suite) down the corridor. Our enthusiastic and knowledgeable midwives are specialists in birthing babies with women who have experienced a normal pregnancy.

## **The Meadow Birth Centre offers you:**

- Four birth rooms with facilities and furnishings to provide you with a comfortable home from home atmosphere.
- Private rooms each with en-suite facilities.
- Three state of the art birth pools with mood lighting
- The option for your birth partner and other close friends and family to stay with you throughout your labour and after the birth of your baby.
- Facilities for overnight stay with your birth partner.
- One to one support throughout labour and birth by one of our skilled and knowledgeable midwives.
- Individual care from your midwife which is tailored to you and your baby.
- Gas and Air (Entonox) and Meptid are available if needed.
- On-going support with the feeding of your baby.

## **Obstetric unit /delivery suite**

The Delivery Suite/Obstetric Unit is located at Worcester Royal Hospital.

The labour ward offers support during labour and birth for those women and babies who need medical care and extra monitoring during pregnancy, labour and birth.

A full range of experienced midwifery and medical staff provide 24 hour cover in this unit and are committed to supporting you to achieve a safe and positive birthing experience.

Our Obstetricians (doctors who specialise in birth) lead your care if you are at higher risk of complications during labour and birth. Midwives also provide care to all women in an obstetric unit. The Delivery Suite ward offers a state of the art birth pool which you may be able to use during your labour and birth. The Delivery Suite has two dedicated obstetric theatres and the neonatal unit, which is staffed 24 hours with nurses and doctors for your baby, should the need arise.

Why choose a Delivery Suite/Obstetric Unit?

- facilities and medical staff available to support you if your pregnancy and birth are complicated
- birth on the obstetric unit may be recommended for you or your baby. Your midwife or doctor will discuss this with you.
- more intensive monitoring facilities available, if you or your baby require it
- epidurals available 24 hours a day
- neonatal unit for your baby is located next door
- 1:1 care in labour
- Support to assist you feed your baby

**If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.**

## **Patient Experience**

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

## **Feedback**

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

## **How to contact PALS:**

**Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: [wah-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.PET@nhs.net)**

## **Opening times:**

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.