

# Birthing Options at University Hospitals Bristol and Weston

Advice regarding the Birthing Environments that are available within UHBW

This purpose of this leaflet is to explain what birthing options are available to you within The University Hospitals Bristol and Weston Trust. The options for place of birth will be discussed with you at your booking appointment and throughout your pregnancy. Ensuring the safety of you and your baby is our main priority so discuss your choices with your midwife and obstetrician so they can support you to make an informed decision. All the midwives working throughout the Trust are passionate in supporting you during the birth of your baby. We hold a strong philosophy of women centred care and will work closely with you and your birthing partners throughout your birth. We support your partner's involvement and value their presence.

Options for place of birth:

- Central Delivery Suite (St Michaels, Level C)
- Alongside Midwifery led unit (St Michaels, Level E)
- Standalone Midwifery led unit (Ashcombe, Weston)
- Home birth

In all settings:

- Once in active labour you will have 1:1 care provided by a midwife to suit you and your baby's needs. All midwives in St Michael's rotate throughout the hospitals so have experience in all areas.
- Another midwife will be called just before the birth
- A maternity support worker may also be there

## **Central Delivery Suite**

The Central Delivery Suite is a safe option for anyone who:

- Has a low-risk pregnancy and chooses to give birth with us
- Wishes to have an epidural
- Has a more complex pregnancy, and a consultant-led unit has been recommended

The unit is well equipped to deal with any unexpected complications that may arise during your labour and birth.

Our unit has 12 labour rooms, 3 recovery beds, 1 birth pool and a triage assessment unit. The unit is staffed 365 days a year and 24 hours a day by midwifery and obstetric staff able to care for you and your baby. Your care will be provided by midwives unless any complications arise during your labour or birth that requires the assistance of a doctor.

You will have access to any additional pain relief and treatment you would like.

Facilities to provide continuous fetal heart rate monitoring should you decide you would like this or if your baby requires any additional observation.

### **I want to keep my labour as natural as possible**

Our midwives are extremely passionate about supporting you to have a positive and as straightforward birth as possible. The midwives are well skilled at

ensuring that dimmed lighting, music, and a calming environment are maintained wherever you decide to birth. Our midwives will support you to be as mobile as possible even if you require CTG monitor or IV drip.

### **Can I use the birth pool?**

We have 1 birth pool available for use on Central Delivery Suite which is available to all who are suitable. Sometimes it may not be appropriate for some to use the birthing pool dependent upon your specific care needs.

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

Gas and air

Paracetamol, Dihydrocodiene, Oromorph

Pethidine

Epidural – Performed by an Anaesthetist in your birthing room.

If you wish to use a TENS machine, birthing ball, peanut ball for labour you will need to bring this in with you.

### **What if there is a problem?**

The maternity unit has two operating theatres and is staffed by midwives and a team of doctors specialising in labour and birth. The Delivery Suite is situated immediately below our Level 3 Neonatal Unit that provides highly specialist care to babies from all over the South West of England and South Wales should your baby require any additional support.

## Midwife Led unit

The midwife led unit is a safe option for anyone who:

- Is healthy and well before pregnancy starts
- Remains well throughout the pregnancy
- Is deemed low risk at their 36 week risk assessment or it has been agreed with a consultant prior to labour
- Goes into labour spontaneously between 37 and 42 weeks of pregnancy
- Has no complication during labour
- Has GBS identified during the antenatal period (But isn't allergic to penicillin) (St Michael's alongside unit only)

Midwife led units are designed to resemble a home from home environment.

For planned births in freestanding midwifery units and alongside midwifery there were no significant differences in adverse perinatal outcomes compared with a planned birth in an obstetric unit

Women who planned to birth in a midwife led unit had significantly fewer interventions, including substantially fewer intrapartum caesarean sections, and more 'normal births' than women who planned birth in an obstetric unit

### **What pain relief is available?**

Pain relief such as gas and air and paracetamol are available on the midwife led units. The alongside unit in St Michael's can also provide oral morphine and pethidine for early labour.

There are also 2 birth pools available in St Michael's, and 1 in Ashcombe. If you wish to use a TENS machine or birthing ball for labour you will need to bring this in with you.

### **Possible changes in situation in labour, what may happen?**

If your labour is progressing slowly, you require an epidural or there are any concerns, your midwife will discuss with you your options. This may include advising a transfer to central delivery suite which is located 2 floors below the midwifery led unit in St Michael's.

From the standalone midwife led unit in Ashcombe the midwife may advise a transfer via ambulance to central delivery suite at St Michael's Hospital. Journey time is approximately 40 minutes which can be impacted by traffic and ambulance waiting times.

## **Home birth**

Home birth is considered a safe option for anyone who:

- Is healthy and well before pregnancy starts
- Remains well throughout the pregnancy
- Goes into labour spontaneously between 37 and 42 weeks of pregnancy
- Has no complication during labour
- Is deemed low risk at their 36 week risk assessment

At home you will be in a familiar place and feel comfortable in your surroundings. You will be able to tailor the environment to your personal needs including having your own linen, pillows, lighting etc

A midwife skilled in providing homebirth care will be present during your labour and a second midwife will be called out for the birth.

Providing there are no concerns by your Midwife about you or your baby, you should be able to remain at home following the birth and not require admission to hospital

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

Your midwife will bring pain relief such as gas and air but you will need to hire your own birthing pool and TENS machine should you plan to use them. This can be discussed with your community midwife.

### **What if there is a problem?**

If your labour is progressing slowly, you require an epidural or there are complications, your midwife will advise a transfer by ambulance to St Michael's Hospital. Journey time will depend on where you live and can be impacted by traffic and ambulance waiting times. You may need to consider childcare arrangements.

For people having their 1<sup>st</sup> baby there is a 45% chance of requiring transfer to an obstetric unit during labour or immediately after the birth.

The transfer rate is significantly lower at 12% for second and subsequent babies.