



**The Leeds
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust

Your choice.... The birth of your baby

Information for patients



Leeds Centre for
Women's Health

Planning where to have your baby is an important decision. If you are at low risk of developing complications giving birth in the UK is generally safe wherever you choose to have your baby. This leaflet will help you understand the birthing options available to you.

You can choose to have your baby at home or in hospital. We will support you in your choice of birth setting wherever you choose to give birth.

In hospital you can choose to have your baby on the Obstetric unit at St James's or the Leeds General Infirmary or the Lotus Midwifery Unit at Leeds General Infirmary.



Having your baby at home

If you have already had at least one baby and are at low risk of complications it is as safe to have your baby at home or in a midwifery led unit compared to an obstetric unit.

If you are planning to have your first baby at home there is a small increase in the risk of a poorer outcome for your baby.



Advantages of home birth

The advantages of giving birth at home include:

- Being in familiar surroundings, where you may feel more relaxed and better able to cope in labour.
- Not having to interrupt your labour to go into hospital.
- Not needing to leave your other children, if you have any.
- Not having to be separated from your partner after the birth.
- Lower likelihood of having an assisted birth, such as forceps or ventouse, than giving birth in hospital.

Things to consider about a home birth:

- You may need to transfer to a hospital if there are complications.
- If you choose to give birth at home or in a unit run by midwives, you should be given information by your midwife about what would happen if you had to be transferred to hospital during labour and how long this would take. Epidurals are not available at home, but you can use gas and air, a warm bath, a birth pool, TENS and any other relaxation techniques you've learned.
- Your doctor or midwife may recommend you give birth in hospital - for example, if you're expecting twins or if your baby is breech. Your midwife or doctor will explain why they think a hospital birth is safer for you and your baby.

Planning a home birth

Talk to your midwife if you would like more information about having a home birth. If you would like a home birth, your midwife will arrange for the Lotus Midwifery team to help and support you. Here are some questions you might want to ask:

- How long would it take if I needed to be transferred to hospital?
- Which hospital would I be transferred to?
- Would a midwife be with me all the time?
- Can I get a birthing pool?

Lotus Midwifery Unit

The Lotus Midwifery Unit is a separate low risk, midwife led maternity unit. The Lotus unit is on delivery suite (L45) at Leeds General Infirmary.

There are 3 rooms in the Lotus Midwifery Unit which include, birthing pools, soft beds, birthing mats, and birthing balls. There are low lights, electric candles and en-suite bathrooms to help keep you and your birthing partner comfortable and relaxed during your labour and birth. If you are at low risk of developing complications having your baby in the Lotus Midwifery Unit is particularly suitable for you as the rate of interventions is lower and the outcome for your baby is no different to having your baby in an Obstetric Unit.



Advantages of the Lotus Midwifery Unit

The advantages of giving birth at a midwifery unit include:

- Being in surroundings where you may feel more relaxed and better able to cope in labour.
- Midwife led care.
- Lower likelihood of having an assisted birth (forceps or ventouse) than giving birth in an obstetric unit.

Considerations

There are some things to think about if you're considering giving birth in a midwifery unit or birth centre.

- Epidurals are not available in the Lotus midwifery unit.
- Continuous monitoring of your baby's heart beat is not possible in the Lotus midwifery unit.
- You may need to be transferred to the delivery suite (obstetric unit) if there are any complications.
- Your doctor or midwife may feel it's safer for you and your baby to give birth in hospital.

Planning a birth in a midwifery unit or birth centre

- Speak to your midwife about the Lotus Midwifery Unit or visit our website link for more information.



Hospital birth

If you choose to give birth in hospital, you'll be looked after by midwives, but doctors will be available if needed.

You'll still have choices about the kind of care you want. Your midwives and doctors will provide information about this to help you make an informed decision about your labour care.

You can choose to have a hospital birth at Leeds General Infirmary or St James's. Sometimes one hospital may be recommended over another depending on your individual situation. You may be asked to attend a different hospital at times when the delivery suites in Leeds are busy, however this is rare, and will be discussed with you in full.

Advantages of hospital birth

The advantages of giving birth in hospital include:

- Direct access to obstetricians if your labour becomes complicated.
- Direct access to anaesthetists, who give epidurals and general anaesthetics.
- Direct access to specialists in newborn care (neonatologists) and specialised neonatal care for your baby should this be needed.



Considerations

There are some things you should think about if you're considering a hospital birth:

- You may go home directly from the labour ward or you may be moved to a postnatal ward.
- In hospital, you may be looked after by a different midwife from the one who looked after you during your pregnancy.
- You're more likely to have an epidural, episiotomy, or a forceps or ventouse delivery in hospital.



Further Information

If you have any questions or need more information about where to have your baby please discuss this with your midwife or doctor.

Additional resources

Additional resources are available on the NICE website or NHS website, to help you plan your place of birth. Please click the links below.

- **NICE - Choosing where to give birth**

<https://www.nice.org.uk/Media/Default/sharedlearning/885supportingmaterial.pdf>

- **NHS - Where to give birth: the options**

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/labour-and-birth/preparing-for-the-birth/where-to-give-birth-the-options/>



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