

Choosing where to have your baby



Most women will have a normal pregnancy and birth, and so there are a range of options available to you. It is important that wherever you choose to have your baby it is somewhere you feel comfortable and relaxed.

Your midwife will assess you throughout your pregnancy and will explain to you any risk factors which may influence your choice of place of birthing your baby. Giving birth is generally safe wherever you have your baby.¹

Where can I have my baby?

Your midwife will be happy to discuss your options with you and help you make the right decision for you and your baby.

At home

If all is well and your pregnancy is low risk, you may wish to think about a home birth where community midwives can care for you during labour and birth in the comfort of your own home. If you would like a water birth, you will be supported with this. If complications arise then transfer to hospital would be recommended.

The transfer rate is 40% if you are having your first baby and 10% for your second and subsequent babies.

Birth centres

We are fortunate to have 3 birth centres in Cornwall and the 'Island Birth Suite' on the Isles of Scilly. These are staffed by midwives and maternity support workers.

Evidence¹ tells us that if you are having a low risk pregnancy, birth units are safe and offer benefits to the mother. Planned births in birth centres are equally as safe for baby compared with planned birth in an obstetric unit. Women who plan to have their baby in a birth centre generally have fewer interventions and are more likely to have a normal birth than those who plan their birth at an obstetric unit.

Birth centres are suitable if you are having a low risk pregnancy, haven't experienced any previous pregnancy complications and have a BMI under 35 – if you aren't sure whether you meet the criteria, speak to your midwife.

Truro Birth Centre

Opened in November 2017, it is on the first floor of the Princess Alexandra Maternity Wing and is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There are 4 en-suite rooms with birthing pools.

If you need to stay for more than four hours following the birth care is provided on the postnatal ward, where partners are allowed to stay – a limited number of recliner chairs are available.

Unfortunately the unit is unable to offer face to face tours but they do have a facebook page which includes photos and information. Find them on Facebook @ 'Truro Birth Centre'.



Penrice Birth Centre



The Penrice birth centre is run by a team of midwives and midwifery support workers. It is manned between 8am-8pm and is available for labour and birth 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There are two birthing rooms, one with a birthing pool and one without.

You will not be able to stay overnight after having your baby. However, there are two postnatal rooms which you can use between 8am-8pm every day for additional feeding support. Find them on facebook @ 'Penrice Birth Centre'.

Helston Birth Centre

Reopened in 2020 after a full refurbishment. It has one birthing room with a pool so you will have exclusive use of the unit. The midwife on call will look after you during labour and birth.

Isles of Scilly

There are facilities to birth in St Mary's Hospital or at home if suitable. Clinical reasons or choice may necessitate birth at Treliske.

With all of our birthing centres, if all is well, you will be discharged home within 2 to 6 hours after the birth of your baby.



Princess Alexandra Wing Obstetric Unit, Treliske

If you have certain medical conditions, have had a complicated previous pregnancy or a problem arises in this pregnancy, you may be advised to give birth in the acute maternity unit.

Here, care is given by a team of professionals, including midwives, maternity support workers, obstetric medical staff, anaesthetists and a neonatal team who have the skills and facilities in caring for women and babies with high risk factors.

There is an online tour available on Youtube, please search 'Royal Cornwall Hospital Maternity Tour'.



Postnatal care

Most women are discharged home within a few hours of birth. There is a postnatal ward at Treliske, should you need a longer stay in hospital. The best place for you to recover is in the familiar surroundings of your own home.

On the day after discharge you will receive a telephone consultation or appointment (based on your need). This will be with a midwife in your local team, not necessarily your named midwife. If you have had your first baby, you will be offered a home visit.

You may be offered a home visit if you have had a cesarean, please ask if you feel unable to leave your home. NIPE checks (head to toe checks) are completed by midwives either in hospital or the community when your baby is between 24-72 hours of age. You may be asked to bring your baby in for this.

You will see a midwife at least twice after the birth (the day of baby's birth is counted as day 0). These consultations are usually at a postnatal clinic in the community.

If you need extra support with feeding your baby you can be seen by one of our maternity support workers, who work alongside the midwives and can see you at home if necessary.

Contact numbers

Delivery Suite, Treliske: 01872 252361

Helston Birth Centre: 01326 430221

Penrice Birth Centre: 01726 873079

Truro Birth Centre: 01872 252025

Urgent advice from community midwives:

Tel: 01872 258000

Further information

NHS choices/Pregnancy and baby

¹ The Birth Place Study (2015)

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

