

Where can my baby be born?

Having a baby is a very special event. This leaflet explains to you the options available at Aneurin Bevan Health Board. Although some women know as soon as they are pregnant where they would like their baby to be born, it is worth finding out about all the choices available to you.

Giving birth is generally very safe. For healthy women with straight-forward pregnancy, complications for babies are low (4.3 events per 1000 births).

Your midwife will discuss your options early in your pregnancy, usually at the booking visit. You do not have to make a decision at that time; your place of birth can be decided at any point in your pregnancy. You may also find it helpful to talk to your partner or other women who have had babies before making a final decision. Occasionally you may be advised to change your place of birth due to a complication that has occurred in the pregnancy.

Midwives are here to support and advise you and your family in your choice. Please ask if you have any questions



What are my choices?

There are four choices to consider when thinking about where you would like your baby to be born. You can choose to have your baby at home, at a freestanding birth centre or a birth centre adjacent to the obstetric unit, both led by midwives, or your baby can be born in the obstetric unit. Wherever you decide to have your baby you will be cared for by midwives before, during and after the birth.

Home Birth or Birth Centre

Most healthy women go on to have a straight-forward labour and can give birth at home or in a midwife-led birth centre. It has been found that women who labour at home or in a midwife led birth centre are less likely to have problems in their labour, such as needing a caesarean section. This is probably because women feel more relaxed in this type of environment.

Home Birth

For women planning to give birth to their second or subsequent baby at home, there appears to be no differences in outcomes for babies between planned births in obstetric units. For women having a first baby, a planned home birth increases the risk for the baby compared to giving birth in an obstetric or midwifery-led unit.

Should you choose to have your baby at home, two midwives would be with you for the birth. Many women choosing a home birth find they do not need pain-relieving drugs. However, 'gas & air' is available. The midwives looking after you will have equipment which may be needed in the unlikely event of an emergency. If you are thinking about planning a home birth,

please talk to your midwife, she will be very happy to give you more information.

Midwife-led Birth Centres:

Midwives, assisted by maternity support workers, staff the birth centre. The midwives who work at the midwife-led birth centres specialise in the care of women with uncomplicated pregnancies and straight-forward labours. Midwifery-led birth centres appear to be as safe as obstetric units for the baby and offer benefits for the mother such as fewer caesarean sections and more normal births.

Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr Birth Centre is a freestanding birth centre where mothers and babies can stay after the birth. Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan has a birth room where the midwife accompanies the woman in labour and they return home soon after the birth. There are also midwifery-led birth centres within the obstetric units.

What happens if I am at home or at a birth centre and have problems in labour?

Although most labours are straight-forward unexpected problems can happen. If a problem did occur during your labour at home or in a midwife-led birth centre you may be transferred to the obstetric unit where care is available from an obstetrician (doctor who cares for women with complications of pregnancy), neonatologist (doctor who cares for babies) or anaesthetist (doctor who provides anaesthetic). Your midwife will arrange for an ambulance to take you to the obstetric unit. Ambulance transfer times in this area are variable dependent on the workload of

the ambulance service. However we aim for this time to be as short as possible. Transfer rates are variable but a recent English study showed that for women having their first baby, up to 45% transferred from planned home births, and between 36%-40% for births planned at midwifery-led birth centres. For women having a second or subsequent baby, the transfer rate is around 10%

Obstetric Unit

If you have additional health needs, or develop a problem during your pregnancy you are advised to have your baby in an obstetric unit. You can choose to have your baby in the obstetric unit, even if you have a straight-forward pregnancy. You may decide to choose this option if you plan to have epidural pain relief during labour.

Who can I talk to?

Your midwife is always happy to talk to you about your plans for your labour and birth. Her name and a 24 hour contact number will be on the front page of your maternity record. You are welcome to visit the midwife-led birth centre or obstetric unit to have a look around before making a final decision, please contact the unit to arrange this.



Phone Numbers:

Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr Birth Centre:
01443 802437 / 01443 802428

Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan:
01495 363308

Royal Gwent Hospital:
01633 238164

Nevill Hall Hospital:
01873 732139

Website: Virtual tours of all units are available
www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/866/page/40733

Other useful sites for information:

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

The Pregnancy Book:
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/index/pregnancy/?lang=en>

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Evidence taken from:

Perinatal and maternal outcomes by planned place of birth for healthy women with low risk pregnancies: the Birthplace in England national prospective cohort study BMJ 2011;343:d7400
<http://www.bmj.com/content/343/bmj.d7400>



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Information for women and families

