

Choosing a Birthing Centre: What You Need to Know



Highlights

After giving birth, many women can go home within six hours if all is well, with midwifery support continuing postpartum.

Birthing centres offer a relaxed, home-like atmosphere with minimal medical intervention.

They are typically run by midwives and focus on low-risk pregnancies.

Birthing centres often provide continuous care, building a strong relationship between midwife and patient.

Most birthing centres are publicly funded, so the cost is usually covered by public health services.

In This Article:

Options for Where to Have Your Baby

Why Consider a Birthing Centre?

When Should You Book the Birthing Centre?

Can You Have Your Antenatal Care at the Birthing Centre?

What is the Cost of a Birthing Centre?

What Happens After Giving Birth?

Tools And Assistance

Options for Where to Have Your Baby

Once you learn you're pregnant, you'll need to think about:

- Where you want to give birth
- Who will care for you
- The birth experience you desire

Exploring all birthing options, including a birthing centre, will help you find the care that's best for you. It's essential to feel comfortable with your care provider, as a positive, trusting relationship is crucial. You have the right to receive respectful care that supports informed choices and is culturally safe.

Why Consider a Birthing Centre?

A birthing centre offers a more relaxed and home-like setting, focusing on the normality of pregnancy and childbirth. They are typically staffed by midwives and offer a less medicalized approach compared to hospitals.

Advantages of choosing a birthing centre include:

Comfortable Environment: Private rooms with a double bed and ensuite bathroom.

Personalized Care: Continuous care from the same midwife team throughout your pregnancy, birth, and postpartum.

Less Medical Intervention: Ideal for low-risk pregnancies, with fewer interventions compared to hospitals.

Water Birth Options: Many centres offer water birthing facilities.

Family and Support: You can have your chosen support people present, and some centres allow children to join.

Keep in mind that birthing centres are available only for low-risk pregnancies, and if complications arise, you will be transferred to a hospital. Pain relief options may be limited to natural methods, but gas and medications may still be available. If you want an epidural, you will be transferred to the hospital's labour ward.

When Should You Book the Birthing Centre?

If you plan to give birth at a birthing centre, consult with your midwife or doctor early to check availability in your area. Birthing centres are often in high demand, so it's best to book early.

Your initial appointment with a midwife or doctor usually occurs between 10 to 16 weeks of pregnancy. During this visit, you can discuss the availability of birthing centres and learn about antenatal classes.

Can You Have Your Antenatal Care at the Birthing Centre?

Yes, many birthing centres offer antenatal care. This care is typically provided by the birthing centre team or the hospital it is connected to. The advantage of having antenatal care at the birthing centre is that you'll become familiar with the team of midwives who will support you throughout your pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. If necessary, you may also see a doctor at the centre for additional medical care.

What is the Cost of a Birthing Centre?

Most birthing centres are publicly funded, meaning that the cost is generally covered by public health services. However, you should confirm any additional costs beforehand, just to be sure.

What Happens After Giving Birth?

After your baby is born, midwives at the birthing centre will assist you with breastfeeding and newborn care. If all is well, you may be able to leave the centre within 6 hours of delivery. The midwives will guide you through the transition home and offer postpartum care, including breastfeeding assistance.

If additional care is required, you may be transferred to the hospital maternity ward. Before leaving the birthing centre, a doctor and midwife will perform a check-up on your baby to ensure they are well. In the following weeks, a midwife or early childhood nurse will visit you at home to provide continued support.

Tools And Assistance

Here are some helpful tools and resources to assist you during your pregnancy and birth journey:

Local Maternity Services: Contact your local maternity services for information on available birthing centres and the types of care they offer. These services can guide you to the best options based on your location and pregnancy.

Midwifery and Medical Professionals: Speak to a midwife or obstetrician early in your pregnancy to discuss your care preferences and birthing options. These professionals can also provide guidance on the best course of action should complications arise during your pregnancy or birth.

Antenatal Classes: Many birthing centres offer antenatal classes that cover everything from birthing techniques to newborn care. Ask your care provider about enrolling in these classes to help you prepare for childbirth and beyond.

Support Networks: Reach out to support networks for expectant parents, including online forums, local parenting groups, and breastfeeding support groups. Connecting with other parents can provide valuable insights and emotional support during your pregnancy and after your baby is born.

Pregnancy and Birth Apps: Many apps offer tools to track your pregnancy, help with birth planning, and provide information on symptoms, appointments, and more. These apps can help you stay organized and informed throughout your pregnancy.

Insurance Information: If you have private health insurance, check with your provider about any additional coverage for birthing centre services or private maternity care options. It's important to clarify any costs that may not be covered by public health services.

Postpartum Care: After the birth, ensure you have access to postpartum care, including home visits by midwives or health visitors. This support can help with breastfeeding, recovery, and adjusting to life with a newborn.