

# Having Your Baby at Home

## If you're thinking about a home birth...

Home birth is an option for women whose pregnancies are healthy and low risk. If you are thinking about home birth, you may want to consider:

- **your priorities** -- what's most important to you and to the birth of your new baby?
- **your 'ideal birth'** – if you could do it entirely 'your way', what would it look like?
- **your main reasons for wanting to birth at home?** – do you want to avoid the hospital, and do you accept the limitations of being at home?
- **safety** -- is your home safe in terms of its location, access, amenities and general level of clutter and cleanliness?

## If transport to hospital is required...

If you want or need to go to the hospital at any time during or after your labour and birth, transport will be organized and made in the safest, most convenient way – either by private car or ambulance, depending on the circumstances. Please make sure that there is enough room in your driveway for ambulance access.

## Getting ready for a home birth

### The '37 week visit' with your midwife

One of your midwives will visit you at home around three weeks before your due date to give you some supplies and to talk about your plans. You are welcome to invite anyone who will be attending your birth to come to this visit to hear about your plans for the birth and to address any questions they may have.

### General Preparations

- make sure that your house number is clearly visible from the road, and lighted if possible; or put something bright (balloons, survey tape, etc.) to mark the driveway
- post the Emergency Calls for Home Birth, including explicit directions to your house, in a prominent place
- prepare a "hospital bag" for mum and baby; and put it in the baby's car seat so it's ready to go
- keep your car in good working order, with enough gas in it in case transport to hospital is required

More information about home birth can be found at [www.hellobabymidwiferycare.com](http://www.hellobabymidwiferycare.com) and the website of the BC College of Midwives, [www.cmbc.bc.ca](http://www.cmbc.bc.ca).

## Setting up the Birthing Area

Wherever in your home you choose to give birth should be clean, draft and dust-free, easily heated and with good lighting available. Some people prefer to use their living room or guest room for the birth, keeping their own bedroom clean and peaceful for afterwards. Wherever you choose to be, you will need:

- **Lights** - good light needs to be available near the birthing area and the tables where equipment will be laid out; (lights do not need to be on)
- **Tables** - one 2' x 4' table or dresser at counter-top height and one smaller table near the birthing area; both clean and cleared of any clutter

## Birth Supplies

### Essential Items:

- 2 rolls paper towels
- 2 to 3 plastic buckets (one gallon size, for vomit, urine, etc., or for bailing the pool in water birth)
- 1 large heavy pot with lid (for hot compresses)
- 1 bowl for placenta; 2 medium zip-lock freezer bags for placenta
- two garbage bags for trash and laundry, placed inside a couple of sturdy cardboard boxes
- 12 overnight, heavy or maxi sanitary napkins
- a **digital oral** thermometer for taking the baby's temperature (and temperature of the pool!)

### Birth Linens:

- 2 clean sheets for the birth (old sheets are fine)
- 12 washcloths for hot compresses for the mother's perineum)
- 6 - 8 towels (soft and absorbent, for drying baby or mum); 8 -12 towels for a water birth
- 8 - 10 flannel receiving blankets (for the baby)
- one plastic sheet or waterproof cover for bed or mattress/camping foam where you may give birth (6 ml plastic from hardware store is fine)

All linens should be washed in hot water and line dried or dried in a hot dryer until thoroughly dry. If you can, put everything into paper bags or clean pillow cases and label them with contents on the outside.

### Additional Items for Water Births:

- a birthing pool, with a liner, hose, and pump (preferably electric!) – ask your midwives if one is available to rent or borrow
- a tarp or plastic sheet to protect the floor
- **lots** of towels (cheap is fine, thrift shop specials?)