Your maternity choices
Information for pregnant women
Preparing for the birth

If you haven’t already done so, get in touch with a midwife or GP as soon as possible.

Ideally, this should be by week 10 of your pregnancy. Telling your GP and/or midwife promptly will help to make sure you receive maternity healthcare that takes into account all your health needs and preferences.

If you choose to, you can go to antenatal classes. These classes help you to prepare for your baby's birth and learn to look after and feed your baby. They can also help you:

• to stay healthy during pregnancy, and give you confidence and information
• learn about the different arrangements for labour and birth and the choices available to you
• help you to make your own birth plan

Places in antenatal classes can get booked up early, so it’s a good idea to start making enquiries early in pregnancy so that you can secure a place in the class that you choose.

You can attend more than one class. Ask your midwife, health visitor or GP or contact independent providers such as the National Childbirth Trust. Please note that independent providers may charge for antenatal classes.

Making a birth plan

A birth plan is a record of what you would like to happen during your labour and after the birth.

You don’t have to create a birth plan, but if you would like one your midwife will be able to help. You may also want to discuss some things with the baby’s father, your friends/relatives.

To find out more about the topics a birth plan covers and to help you decide on your wishes for the birth, visit www.nhs.uk - search “pregnancy and baby.”
Deciding where to give birth

It is your choice as to where you give birth. However, there may be a clinical need for you to have your baby in hospital rather than at home. Your midwife will discuss this with you.

Whilst you can choose any NHS provider, locally, the main maternity providers are:

- **Countess of Chester**
  NHS Foundation Trust
  01244 365000
  www.coch.nhs.uk
- **Liverpool Women’s**
  NHS Foundation Trust
  0151 708 9988
  www.liverpoolwomens.nhs.uk
- **One to One Midwives**
  0330 330 9121
  www.onetoonemidwives.org
- **St Helens and Knowsley Teaching**
  Hospitals Trust
  0151 426 1600
  www.sthk.nhs.uk
- **Warrington and Halton Hospitals**
  NHS Foundation Trust
  01925 635911
  www.whh.nhs.uk

Although most mum’s to be choose to have their baby locally, where they can be supported by loved ones, you can refer yourself to any of the local providers listed opposite alongside their contact details, or indeed another provider should you prefer.

You can choose to give birth at:

**Home or in a hospital**

Choosing where to give birth is a big decision. When deciding upon where you would like to have your baby you should take certain matters into consideration. This can include your obstetric (childbirth) and medical history and also what services you may want in particular, forms of pain relief.

The decision you make about where to have your baby is ultimately yours, you should take into account where you feel most relaxed, comfortable and in control.

About having your baby at **HOME**

Things for you to consider:

- You will not have to share any facilities with other people
- A midwife will be with you for most of your labour and a maternity support worker may also be there
- If you or your baby need to see a doctor your midwife will call an ambulance and take you to the maternity unit at a hospital
- Pain relief available at home includes: gas and air, an injection of pain relief, a bath or birth pool that you provide
- After the birth, a midwife will provide care during your stay. Doctors, including Obstetricians, Neonatologists, Paediatricians and Anaesthetists are available to provide care if required
- For more information about hospital births, please visit your chosen providers website

About having your baby in **HOSPITAL**

Things for you to consider:

- A midwife will be with you for most of your labour and a maternity support worker may also be there
- If you or your baby needs to see a doctor, a midwife will call an onsite doctor who will come to your bed to see you
- Pain relief includes: Gas and air, an injection of pain relief, a bath or birth pool that is provided and an epidural
- After the birth, a midwife will provide care during your stay. Doctors, including Obstetricians, Neonatologists, Paediatricians and Anaesthetists are available to provide care if required
- For more information about hospital births, please visit your chosen providers website

Please do discuss your options with your partner, family/friends, as well as your midwife or obstetrician. Even if you decide early on where you would like to have your baby, you can change your mind at any stage of your pregnancy.
After having your baby

Your six week postnatal check

You should have your postnatal check about six weeks after your baby’s birth to make sure you feel well and you are recovering properly. Some GP surgeries do not routinely offer a postnatal check.

You can always request an appointment for a check, especially if you have any concerns. It’s a good idea to make a list of questions to take along with you.

There are no set guidelines for what a postnatal check for mothers should involve. However, there are guidelines for your baby’s six-to-eight-week check.

Routine checks your baby will receive

You will probably spend a large part of the first few days after birth looking at your baby!

If you notice anything that worries you, however small, ask your midwife.

Within the first 24 hours, a health professional will offer to give your baby an injection of vitamin K. This is to prevent a rare but serious blood disorder.

Your baby will also have a thorough newborn physical examination carried out by a midwife, doctor or neonatal nurse practitioner in their first 72 hours. Among other things, their eyes, heart, hips, and (in boys) testicles will be screened for possible problems.

Your baby will have two other screening tests in their first few weeks. These are:

• blood spot (heel prick) test
• newborn hearing screening test

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For more information and videos from other mum’s about pregnancy, birth and postnatal care for you and your baby, visit www.nhs.uk - “search pregnancy and baby.”