

FAQ'S

Why should I consider giving birth outside of the hospital?

We consider birth to be one of the most profound moments in a family's life. When this process is supported in a way that does not interfere with the woman's natural instincts, it can be one of the most empowering and fulfilling experiences you can have and will impact everyone present in the deepest of ways. Outside of the hospital, you have the choice in who attends your birth and who cares for you. You can choose what foods you feel like eating and what you want to drink. You can walk, dance or sleep uninterrupted if you want to. A woman who feels safe, can labor without the stress hormone cortisol slowing her labor down.

If you want to, you can give birth in water and then move to a cozy bed where you are given the space to bond with your baby without unnecessary interventions inhibiting the serenity and connectedness of the precious moments following the birth.


If there is extra care needed for you or your baby, we do it with baby in your arms, with full explanation to you about what is happening. Giving birth outside of the hospital allows for more of what you want during the labor and birth process while we as midwives provide the safety net for you to do what comes naturally to you.

Your baby floats in warm water in your womb during the nine months of pregnancy. For this reason the warm water in the birth tub is an environment that's comforting and familiar to them. They often don't even cry when they're born into water. They just open their eyes and look around. They recognize your voice because they've been hearing you from inside the womb and then they look straight into your eyes and connect with you.

Newborn babies are cognizant beings. They don't have words yet to tell you how they feel but they do understand and have feelings. For this reason, we understand the importance of treating newborn babies with gentleness and respect.

What are the benefits of giving birth at the birth center?

The most important question to ask yourself in choosing where to give birth is where do you feel most comfortable? For many women, being in the privacy and serenity of the birthing rooms at the center is where they feel best. If you are concerned about not having much space at home, or you have a concern about privacy, the birth center could be a good choice for you. The rooms are like a bed and breakfast inn; warm and beautiful. All you have to do when you go into active labor is call us and we meet you there.



You just bring with you the things you'll need for your baby. Everything is set up for you, you just come and we take care of you.

What are the benefits of giving birth at home?

It is our experience that many women feel most comfortable in their own nesting space, immersed in their own familiar sights, smells and sounds. Also, you don't have to drive anywhere in labor. All you have to do is call us and we come to you. We bring a birth tub and set everything up. After giving birth, you climb into your own bed with your baby and stay there. We stay with you and provide postpartum care for about 6 hours, then we take everything apart and clean house as it was before we came.

What is and isn't a good place to give birth?

With very few exceptions, where you live is a good place to give birth. We have done hundreds of births in small apartments and it has not been a problem. Babies are very small and don't take up much room! Joking aside, the birth tub is about 5 ½ feet in diameter and can be in a corner. Usually moving a coffee table to the side makes enough room. Although we bring a lot of equipment with us, none of it is large and it can be laid out on a small table.

Women rarely make a lot of noise during birth. Unlike the movies, you probably won't scream or yell at you partner in labor. Most women will make soft grunting noises and don't want to talk at all. The baby will probably make much more noise than you do. We have never really had a problem with neighbors complaining.

Who will attend my birth?

We attend your birth in a team for many reasons. First, we want to make sure there is enough support for everyone, for you, your partner, and for baby. In the event that both you and baby need extra attention following the birth we want to be certain we have enough skilled hands. And secondly, if a birth is going through the night, we want to make sure that we've had some rest and are at our best. Sometimes, we will take turns to monitor the baby, and make sure everything is going smoothly. There will always be at least one licensed midwife present and 1-2 trained assistants who are also trained doulas. This way, we can make sure everyone is supported and that there are enough hands to go around during the birth and to assist in cleaning up afterwards.

What kind of training have the midwives had?

Our midwives are Licensed Midwives and Certified Professional Midwives. and licensed by the same licensing authority that licenses medical doctors. They have been trained through apprenticeships which includes skills' training that extends over many years. Please see the staff page for full description.

Do you take insurance?

We are considered out of network providers for most PPO insurance policies. That being said, we work on a cash basis with our clients. In other words, you will be asked to make payments to us during your pregnancy, with your balance being due at 36 weeks. We contract with insurance billers who are retired midwives and understand the protocols of large insurance companies, and are therefore able to get the largest possible reimbursement. After your 6 week postpartum visit, we will send information for the claim to our billers who then submit it to the insurance company. You will be reimbursed by the insurance company in the amount your policy indicates.

What equipment do you have at the birth?

For home births we bring all of the following equipment in our bags. The birth rooms at the center also have all of the following supplies: A waterproof doppler for monitoring the baby's heartbeat, infant and adult stethoscopes, IV bags and supplies, neo-natal resuscitation equipment and oxygen tanks, blood pressure cuffs, thermometers, instruments and clamps, methergine, ammonia inhalants, syringes and sharps container, blood drawing supplies, cultures, antibiotics, urinary catheters, deelee suction devices and bulb syringes, equipment and lidocaine for suturing, erythromycin ointment, vitamin K, a baby scale and measuring tape, a heater for towels and blankets, supplies to sterilize our equipment, betadine, and many other sterile supplies that we rarely use.

We also have herbs, a homeopathic kit, and other natural remedies for labor and birth as well as birth stools and portable birth tubs for home births. The birth rooms at the center will have large birthing tubs.

Disposable supplies such as plastic-backed sheets, chux under pads, sanitary briefs, lubricating jelly, sitz baths & herbs, umbilical cord care products and more, will need to be ordered in a birth kit that you will order online before giving birth.

What type of care do you provide, what don't you provide?

We work with women that have low risk pregnancies. We do not consider age or weight a factor in determining risk. (For more specifics about what is and isn't considered a risk factor, please contact us directly.) We provide all of your prenatal care, from beginning to end, and it is not usually required that you meet with our back up doctor before your birth, however, he is available to meet with you and we will refer you to him for concerns and issues we want his opinion on.

We do not perform ultrasounds, but we have several referral offices we can send you to. We do not perform amniocentesises, CVS testing, or any invitro

procedures. That being said, we do perform all standard blood work, cultures, urine testing, standard gynecological care, holistic treatment of specific vaginal and hormonal imbalances, and full prenatal care.

We provide holistic, preventative prenatal, birth and postpartum care. We have an extensive understanding of herbs and nutrition as well as prenatal and perinatal psychology. We offer informed consent for all standard tests and procedures. We then empower you to decide for yourself what is most appropriate for you.

What happens during a prenatal exam?

We spend about an hour on each prenatal appointment. The atmosphere is family-centered, and you are encouraged to bring your partner, children and anyone supporting you through your pregnancy. During prenatal appointments, midwives and interns will inform you of your pregnancy and birth options by counseling you and supporting your choices. It is our intention to create an environment where you feel safe to explore your feelings; where you can develop a relationship with us based on trust. Meeting with and becoming familiar with the whole staff is an integral part of prenatal visits.

We follow the standard obstetrical calendar for prenatal appointments:

- every 4 weeks until 28 weeks gestation
- once every 2 weeks from 28-36 weeks gestation
- once a week from 36 weeks until delivery

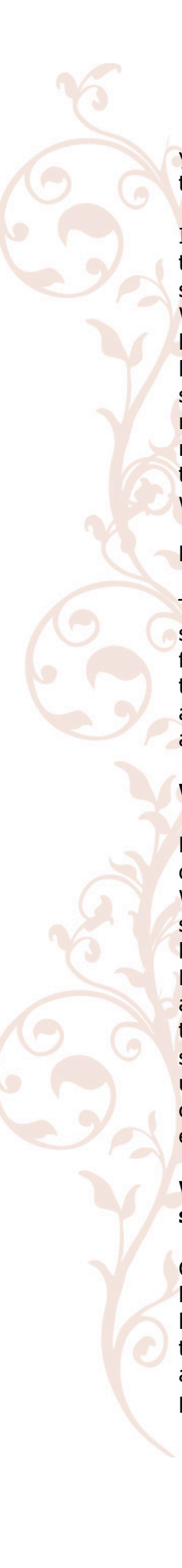
During the hour we thoroughly answer all of your questions and prepare you for birth and caring your baby. We give nutritional advice based on your individual needs and practices and inquire into every aspect of your well being. We consider your partner and children to be our clients and we make ourselves available to support them as well.

The physical exam portion of the appointment usually consists of checking your blood pressure, testing your urine, weighing yourself, listening to your baby's heartbeat, checking your baby's size and position and discussing signs of pre term labor, as well as other pregnancy concerns.

If you are planning a home birth, we will do a home visit about a month before your due date. During the visit we will provide a prenatal exam as well as figure out all logistical issues for the birth.

What happens during my labor and birth?

We monitor you and your baby through labor in a non-invasive way, always respecting your need for privacy, warmth and quiet. Whether you give birth at the center or at home, we keep the lights low and speak and touch you and your baby in a gentle way. We provide comfort measures and support



you if you lose confidence in yourself and remind you that you were designed to give birth and have everything you need inside you.

If dad wants to be in the tub with you or catch the baby, he's welcome to do that. When your baby's born, he or she goes straight into your arms and stays there. We usually do not cut the cord until after the placenta is born. When the umbilical cord is not cut, it continues to provide oxygen to the baby for about five minutes. This gives the baby some transition time to learn how to breathe. After we've made sure that you and the baby are stable, we give you some private bonding time while we do paperwork in the next room. During the first few hours after the birth, we will do a full newborn exam, help you breastfeed your baby, feed you, clean you up and teach you how to take care of yourself and your baby. If you need stitches, we can give them to you at this time.

How long do I stay at the birth center after the birth?

The usual length of stay is four to six hours. By that time, we know you're stable and we've taught you how to care for yourself and your baby. Most families are ready to go home and climb into their own bed and sleep by then. We teach you about any danger signs and are available 24/7 to address any questions or concerns you might have. Your pediatrician will be available to you as well.

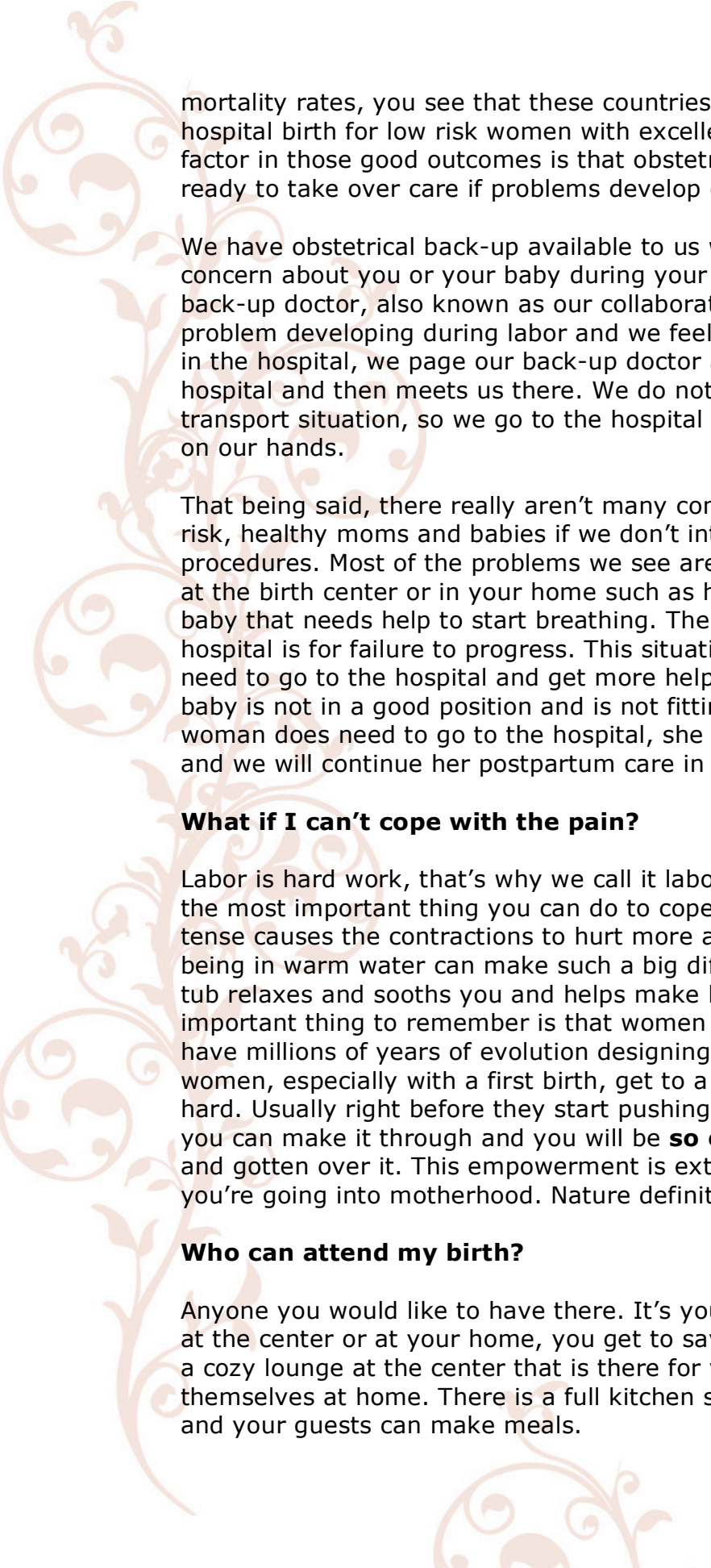
What kind of postpartum care do you provide?

Regardless of where you give birth, we come to your home usually within 2 days, and again at 7-10 days to evaluate and support you and your baby. We can provide breastfeeding assistance, or if there is a need for more specialized breastfeeding care, we can send our lactation specialist to your home.

Postpartum, we take the time to answer your questions, make suggestions, and examine you and the baby and discuss postpartum family adjustment. In the unlikely event that you become depressed, we have many resources to support you. We are very skilled at working with postpartum depression using techniques from Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine, while collaborating with therapists who specialize in supporting women experiencing PPD.

What if there is a complication or an emergency? What if I need a C-section?

Complications are something that many families have concerns about. We have all heard the scary stories about all the things that can go wrong with birth. Something very important to keep in mind though is that so many of the interventions that are routine in the hospital such as pitocin and epidurals actually cause more problems than they prevent in healthy low risk pregnancies. If you look at the countries in the world with the lowest infant



mortality rates, you see that these countries use midwives and out of hospital birth for low risk women with excellent outcomes. Another important factor in those good outcomes is that obstetrical back-up is available and ready to take over care if problems develop during a birth.

We have obstetrical back-up available to us when we need it. If we have a concern about you or your baby during your pregnancy, we have you see our back-up doctor, also known as our collaborating physician. If we have a problem developing during labor and we feel you or your baby would be safer in the hospital, we page our back-up doctor and he calls ahead to the hospital and then meets us there. We do not want to risk an emergency transport situation, so we go to the hospital before we have an emergency on our hands.

That being said, there really aren't many complications that develop in low risk, healthy moms and babies if we don't interfere with drugs and procedures. Most of the problems we see are things we can deal with safely at the birth center or in your home such as heavy bleeding postpartum or a baby that needs help to start breathing. The number one reason we go to the hospital is for failure to progress. This situation is not an emergency; we just need to go to the hospital and get more help. Usually the problem is the baby is not in a good position and is not fitting in the pelvis properly. If a woman does need to go to the hospital, she can go home soon afterwards and we will continue her postpartum care in her home.

What if I can't cope with the pain?

Labor is hard work, that's why we call it labor. Staying calm and relaxed is the most important thing you can do to cope with the discomfort. Being tense causes the contractions to hurt more and be less effective. This is why being in warm water can make such a big difference. Being in the birthing tub relaxes and soothes you and helps make labor bearable. Another important thing to remember is that women were designed to give birth. We have millions of years of evolution designing us to give birth perfectly. Many women, especially with a first birth, get to a point in their labor that feels too hard. Usually right before they start pushing. With support and reassurance, you can make it through and you will be **so** empowered to have hit that wall and gotten over it. This empowerment is extremely valuable to experience as you're going into motherhood. Nature definitely designed it to be that way.

Who can attend my birth?

Anyone you would like to have there. It's your birth. Whether you give birth at the center or at your home, you get to say what works for you. We have a cozy lounge at the center that is there for you and your guests to make themselves at home. There is a full kitchen so you can bring food with you and your guests can make meals.

Although we would not decide for you whether or not you have guests at your birth, we do have some suggestions to support you based on what we've seen work well over the years.

What about my children? Should I have them at the birth?

We love having children at births. We will include your child in what's happening and reassure them if they get concerned. What we've seen over the years is that children usually do quite well at birth as long as they are prepared for what's going to happen with books and videos beforehand. Having someone there whose only job is to support, reassure and care for them is really important too. This person can also take them out of the room if they decide they don't want to be there. Being at the birth can really help your child understand and adjust to the new baby.