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Northumbria Healthcare  
NHS Foundation Trust



# Having your baby with us

Issued by the  
maternity department





*Northumbria Healthcare has one of the highest rated maternity services in the country.*

Choosing where to have your baby is a very important decision and this leaflet provides details of the options available at Northumbria Healthcare. Your community midwife will discuss these options with you and will provide advice, taking into account your medical history. Please ask your community midwife any questions you might have.

## **Why choose to have your baby with us?**

Northumbria Healthcare is one of the country's top performing trusts. We manage health services in North Tyneside and health and social care services in Northumberland.

Our hospitals have been acknowledged as the safest place in the North East for maternity services. The service has been awarded the best possible safety rating, level 3, by the NHS Litigation Authority. This demonstrates that Northumbria Healthcare is constantly striving to ensure a high standard of maternity care for women and their families.

Our maternity service is amongst the best in the country because we:

- Have a high number of midwives to births
- Provide excellent ante-natal care
- Allocate all women a named community midwife who is responsible for co-ordinating all aspects of care during pregnancy
- Offer a range of maternity services throughout our units
- Provide midwifery support 24 hours a day through a dedicated telephone advice line

## Where can I have my baby?

In June 2015, we opened a specialist emergency care hospital in Cramlington – The Northumbria. In this hospital we have a consultant-led obstetric unit alongside a designated midwifery-led unit. This offers women a greater choice of where to have their baby within Northumbria Healthcare.

Having these units together means women can be easily transferred from the midwifery-led unit into our obstetric unit should any complications arise that mean additional medical care is needed. We also provide midwifery-led care at Alnwick, Berwick and Hexham.

You need to choose where to have your baby and where is right for you:

- Where you feel safe, comfortable and relaxed
- Where you feel supported, not only before your baby is born but also during the birth and very importantly following the delivery. This is especially important if it is your first baby and you are adapting to parenthood

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|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Home birth</b></p> <p>If you wish to give birth at home, you may choose this option if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Your pregnancy is uncomplicated</li> <li>✓ Your labour begins naturally between 37 – 42 weeks</li> <li>✓ You are having a single baby who is presenting head down</li> <li>✓ You have had less than five babies</li> </ul>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Co-located midwifery-led unit at Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Cramlington</b></p> <p>If you are low risk and have an uncomplicated pregnancy you can give birth here. The midwifery-led unit runs alongside the consultant-led unit at the new hospital. You may choose this option if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Your pregnancy is low risk</li> <li>✓ Your labour begins naturally between 37 – 42 weeks</li> <li>✓ You are having a single baby who is presenting head down</li> </ul>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Positives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ You will be able to stay at home for labour and birth</li> <li>✓ You will be looked after by a community based midwife</li> <li>✓ Evidence suggests that women who give birth at home require less pain relief although various pain relief methods are available if you need them including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Relaxation and breathing techniques</li> <li>✓ Being active and changing positions regularly</li> <li>✓ Using water</li> <li>✓ Use of birthing aids, for example birthing pools</li> <li>✓ TENS - you will need to arrange this, your midwife will be able to help you</li> <li>✓ Entonox (gas and air) - your midwife will provide this</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Positives</b></p> <p>The unit is led by a team of experienced midwives. Evidence suggests that women who give birth in midwifery-led units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Require fewer interventions, including operative delivery</li> <li>✓ Are more satisfied with their care</li> <li>✓ Require less pain relief, although various pain relief methods are available if you need them including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Relaxation and breathing techniques</li> <li>✓ Being active and changing positions regularly</li> <li>✓ Use of birthing aids, for example birthing pools</li> <li>✓ TENS</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Other things to consider</b></p> <p>If complications develop during labour or birth you would need to be transferred to the consultant-led unit by emergency ambulance supported by your midwife. Common reasons would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Slow progress in labour</li> <li>✓ The need for additional pain relief</li> <li>✓ Closer monitoring of the baby's heart rate</li> <li>✓ Meconium stained water (when the baby opens its bowels)</li> </ul>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Other things to consider</b></p> <p>If complications arise during labour we can easily move you into our consultant-led unit on the adjacent ward where you will be seen immediately by our medical staff. We have ensuite rooms for labour and birth where you can stay until you go home or go to the postnatal ward.</p>   |



### Midwifery-led units at Alnwick, Berwick and Hexham

If you wish to give birth in one of our midwifery-led units, you may choose this if:

- ✓ Your pregnancy is uncomplicated
- ✓ Your labour begins naturally between 37 – 42 weeks
- ✓ You are having a single baby who is presenting head down
- ✓ You have had less than five babies

### Consultant-led care at Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Cramlington

If you have any complications in pregnancy this is the best type of care for you. The delivery suite at Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Cramlington is however an option available to anyone giving birth. The following births can be carried out here - normal vaginal births, forceps deliveries, vacuum deliveries, caesarean sections, twins/multiple births, breech births, preterm births.

### Positives

The unit is led by a team of experienced midwives. Evidence suggests that women who give birth here:

- ✓ Require fewer interventions, including operative delivery
- ✓ Are more satisfied with their care
- ✓ Require less pain relief, although various pain relief methods are available if you need them including:
  - ✓ Relaxation and breathing techniques
  - ✓ Being active and changing positions regularly
  - ✓ Use of birthing aids, for example birthing pools
  - ✓ TENS

### Positives

Midwives, nursing assistants and medical staff are available 24 hours a day.

- ✓ Midwives will carry out most of your care but they will share responsibility for your care with the medical team should any problems arise
- ✓ This is the safest place for high risk women to deliver
- ✓ Various pain relief methods are available if you need them including:
  - ✓ Relaxation and breathing techniques
  - ✓ Being active and changing positions regularly
  - ✓ Use of birthing aids, for example birthing pools
  - ✓ TENS
  - ✓ Epidural – 24 hour service

### Other things to consider

If complications develop during labour or birth you would be transferred to a consultant-led unit supported by your midwife.

### Other things to consider

Your chosen birth partner can stay with you during labour, birth and postnatal on ward 16. We have ensuite side rooms with reclining chairs for partners to sleep on.

## Where you can have your baby

### Home births

The option of a home birth can be discussed with your community midwife and is available for women who we expect to have a normal birth. If you choose to have your baby at home you should discuss this with your community midwife who will give you more detailed information.

### Co-located midwifery-led unit at Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Cramlington

This unit is co-located alongside our medical unit at Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Cramlington. It provides care for low risk women expecting to have a normal birth.

We have additional equipment to promote normal birth and single en-suite rooms to create a homely environment for your birth experience. If any problems arise during labour which mean you need medical attention we can easily move you into the adjacent medical unit.

### Midwifery-led units at Alnwick, Berwick and Hexham

These units are run by midwives and are suitable for women who we expect to have a normal birth. They offer a relaxed, comfortable and homely setting.

Our midwives are highly experienced and will give you advice and encouragement during labour. The units have birthing equipment which helps promote a more natural childbirth. There are birthing pools that can be used. You can choose the pool as a form of pain relief during labour and remain in the pool to deliver your baby if you wish.

Should you need to be transferred in labour for medical assessment, your midwife will accompany you in the ambulance to a consultant-led unit, which may be the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Cramlington, for further care.



*Ruth Hawkin with her daughter Henrietta.*

## **Consultant-led unit at Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Cramlington**

This is where our medical consultants are based. The unit has spacious single rooms with en-suite facilities for privacy and comfort. There are two birthing pools for women who want to have a water birth.

### **Pre-booking information sessions**

To ensure that you receive up to date information about your pregnancy and choices for birth, some areas run early pregnancy pre-booking sessions. You will be given a date and time to attend with a choice of venue, your midwife will arrange this for you.

This session is designed to give you information to help you make informed choices about your care, including:

- What type of births are available at Northumbria Healthcare
- What care you can expect during your pregnancy
- What screening tests are offered for yourself and/or your baby
- What you should be eating
- What you should avoid eating
- Exercise
- What medication is safe to take during pregnancy
- What multivitamins you might take
- Support to stop smoking / drinking alcohol and live a healthy lifestyle

## Booking appointment

This appointment is an opportunity for you to talk further about your choices of care with your midwife. During this meeting your midwife will also ask to speak to you alone. This allows you to discuss any sensitive issues with your midwife that you may find difficult to discuss with your partner or relative present. So do not be concerned when your midwife asks your partner or relative to leave the booking session, it is just to ask some more questions in a safe and relaxed environment.



## Two mums share their experiences:

### When Katie Willits found out she was expecting her first child, she chose the personal setting of a midwifery-led unit

Katie said:

“My community midwife explained to me that I was able to use the midwifery-led unit because my pregnancy was classed as low risk. She stressed that I would get a lot of personal care here and she was absolutely right. It was really reassuring. I was always told what was going on and involved in decision making. The midwives were absolutely fantastic and gave me lots of support. I genuinely wouldn't have wanted to be anywhere else it was wonderful. I was encouraged to keep moving and had the opportunity to use the birthing pool and other state-of-the-art equipment. After the birth I received lots of support to breastfeed which was great as it was my first baby. I couldn't have been more supported and everyone was so friendly.”



*Katie Willits and her son Zach.*

What mums say about our service:

- 99% thought our staff were friendly, helpful and supportive
- 98% felt supported in all aspects of their care
- 96% gave top marks for the cleanliness, warmth and overall environment

## **Anna Allan chose to give birth to her twin daughters in our consultant-led unit**

Gemma and Holly were born seven weeks early and were cared for in the hospital's special care baby unit. Anna said:

"I visited the hospital when I was pregnant and came away with a really good feeling about the staff and the environment so I chose to have my babies here. I'm so glad I did. A premature birth is a worrying situation to find yourself in but the staff were great. Everything was explained to me in a very calm manner. I was really reassured and knew I was in the best place for my babies."

Our special care baby unit is for premature babies and those who need extra care after birth. The unit provides specialist short-term care. It is staffed by a team of nurses, doctors and advanced neonatal nurse practitioners who all work closely with the regional unit in Newcastle to provide the best care possible for newborn babies.



*Anna Allan with Gemma (one of the twins).*

## How we support you

- **Early pregnancy** information session for advice and guidance
- **A named community midwife** will be your contact at every stage of your pregnancy and a team of community midwives visit you at home following the birth of your baby until your care is handed over to your health visitor
- **Antenatal care** is provided in a variety of settings for your convenience
- **Postnatal care** is provided at home or at drop-in sessions to meet your needs. Involving partners in all aspects of your maternity care and parenting classes is important to us. We encourage involvement of partners throughout the pregnancy, delivery and postnatal care

- **Involving partners** in antenatal consultations, scan appointments and parenting classes
- **Direct telephone** contact with a midwife 24 hours a day for advice, support and reassurance
- **Woman only appointment** at booking to allow time to discuss issues with the midwife that you may find difficult to talk about with others there
- **Antenatal clinics** to monitor you and your baby on a regular basis. This includes scanning and screening tests
- **A package of care** tailored to your personal needs
- **Specialist midwives are available** to give extra support if you need it, for example, advice about diabetes, teenage pregnancy and giving up smoking
- Support from **physiotherapists** on relaxation and posture
- Newborn hearing **testing**
- **Easy access** to hospital from A189 and we offer one of the lowest car parking charges in the NHS
- **Health psychology** - the period before and after having a baby can be a time of great uncertainty, worry and anxiety. Our usual coping strategies can be compromised, we might struggle with a problem that we have previously managed without support, or we can develop a concern that we have not experienced before. We view our patients psychological health as equally important as their physical health. Our health psychologists work alongside our obstetrics team and are trained to help people deal with emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced during and after pregnancy, in relation to labour and in connection with gynaecological problems. You can be referred to the health psychology service by any of the health professionals involved in your obstetric care or you can refer yourself.

## Support with feeding your baby

Deciding how to feed your baby is one of many important decisions you will make. Breast milk is unique to you and your baby. It has many health benefits including helping you recover from birth. You will be invited to attend an infant feeding session, during your pregnancy, where you will be shown how to position your baby at the breast and how it all works. We will address any concerns you may have and will tailor the session to meet your needs. Formula feeding recommendations are also discussed.

You are welcome to bring someone with you including your partner. Breastfeeding support is available once you have had your baby from the midwives, health visitor and breastfeeding peer supporter. There is additional support from infant feeding co-ordinators or lactation consultants.

Peer supporters are mums who have breastfed their babies. Additional support groups are also available.



*Members of the breastfeeding peer support group happily breastfeeding their babies.*

## After having her son Oliver at Hexham General Hospital, Lora Dart was impressed with the help and support she received to help her breastfeed and urges women who may be cautious about breastfeeding to just give it a go

Lora, from Hexham said:

“I wanted to give breastfeeding a go and I actually found it a lot easier than I thought it would be. I’m sure this had a lot to do with getting immediate help and support from the midwives. They were brilliant, giving me lots of good advice and encouragement. I went to a support group after I had left hospital and it was really good to get the encouragement and practical help from the midwife and other mums. I would definitely say to give it some time and persevere, your baby needs time to learn what to do too.”



*Lora Dart with son Oliver.*

## Antenatal education: preparation for birth and beyond

This is a course of five sessions run by a variety of health professionals to prepare for birth and parenthood. Some of the topics covered are:

- How your baby develops in the womb
- Changes you may encounter as pregnancy progresses
- What to expect in labour, how to recognise signs of labour
- Practical points for caring for your baby such as changing nappies, bathing, safe sleeping
- Screening options for your baby
- Roles as parents and coping mechanisms

There will also be a postnatal session to share your experiences and enlist onto children's centre activities such as baby massage and save a baby's life courses.

### Contact us

To meet some of our staff and visit any of our maternity units please call us on 03 44 811 8111

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk/maternity](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk/maternity)

## Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

## Other sources of information

**NHS 111**

**NHS Choices**

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

**NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)**

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: **01670 511098**

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

**Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

PIN 519/V4

Review date: April 2023

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