

This information answers some commonly asked questions about planned birth at home for well women with normal risk pregnancies.

Please talk with your midwife or doctor about your situation and what matters to you. We encourage you to ask questions and take time to consider your options.

Why choose a home birth?

Home birth is giving birth to your baby in your own home with a registered midwife in attendance. Women choose home birth for many reasons. Some reasons include:

- ♥ Choice to labour and birth in privacy and comfort
- ♥ Families stay together, there is no separation from baby, partner or other children
- ♥ Care from known midwives during pregnancy, birth and afterwards
- ♥ Reduced interventions such as induction of labour and instrumental birth
- ♥ Higher breast feeding success rates
- ♥ Women report greater satisfaction

Shared Decision Making *It is always okay to ask questions*

BRAND is a handy memory prompt for questions you might like to ask us.

B stands for BENEFITS - What are the benefits of each option in my situation?

R stands for RISKS - What are the risks of each option in my situation?

A stands for ALTERNATIVES - What alternatives might I have to what is being offered? (There are always alternatives!)

N stands for NOTHING - What if I do nothing? Doing nothing, or 'wait and see' is always an option. N can also stand for NOW? - Do I need to make this decision now? Taking time to consider your options, even if only for a few minutes, might be valuable to you.

D stands for DECISION - What is my decision?

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding this brochure, please provide this feedback to your healthcare provider.



Planned Home Birth

Information for families considering a home birth

Is home birth safe?

Yes. Large studies with lots of mothers and babies with low risk pregnancies show that planned home birth with a midwife is as safe for babies and safer for mothers compared to low risk births in hospital.

What is the home birth program?

Northern NSW Local Health District supports the choice of planned, midwife attended home birth as a safe choice for women with uncomplicated pregnancies. Our home birth program is an extension of our hospital midwifery group practice (MGP) service. A small group of midwives care for you during your pregnancy, labour, birth and for the first few weeks after your baby is born. Most of your care is by one midwife, called a primary midwife.

Our program benefits from good collaboration with doctors at our referral hospitals in Tweed and Lismore. The MGP midwives work under the same policies and guidelines as the hospital staff. We will talk with you about how these policies may influence your choices for your pregnancy and birth care.

Home birth care is provided through our public hospital maternity service and is bulk billed to Medicare. To be eligible for this free service you must have a Medicare Card.

Am I eligible to have a home birth?

The more health information you can give your midwives, the better the advice they can give you. We encourage you to talk to us and ask questions. What is right for one woman may not be right for another.

In Northern NSW our Byron MGP service offers the option of home birth. We consider carefully the distance between your home and either Tweed or Lismore hospitals in case you or your baby need to transfer there.

You can plan to give birth to your baby at home if all of the following apply to you:

- ✓ You live within a catchment area
- ✓ Your home has safe, easy access and reliable telecommunications: landline or mobile phone coverage
- ✓ You are Medicare eligible*
- ✓ You are pregnant with one (1) baby
- ✓ You do not have a medical reason that would preclude you from a home birth
- ✓ You attend regular pregnancy care appointments and begin care with the MGP midwives before 34 weeks
- ✓ You go into labour after 37 weeks and before 42 weeks
- ✓ Your baby is head down before labour starts
- ✓ You have paid for the hire of home oxygen
- ✓ You and your support team have been informed about the program and its limitations, you have had the opportunity to discuss it with your midwife and have signed the consent form for planned home birth.

You can change your mind at any time and choose not to birth at home and come into a birth centre or another hospital.

Preparing for a home birth

Most homes are suitable places to give birth. Many women use water for pain relief during labour, and you may choose to use a birth pool, which can be hired or bought. You will need to consider the ease of access to running hot water.

What happens after birth?

After your baby is born a midwife will stay with you until after your placenta is born and we are assured you and your baby are well. Midwives will visit you at home again the next day and regularly over the next few weeks. You will need to bring your baby into hospital for immunisations and newborn hearing screening.

What if something goes wrong?

It is important to consider what will happen if you or your baby require medical assistance. Our midwives use the referral guidelines of the Australian College of Midwives to support shared decision making and make recommendations for transfer to the care of an obstetrician or paediatrician at a hospital.

The most common reasons for transfer to hospital are non-emergency care before or during labour. If complications happen, our midwives are skilled and experienced in providing emergency care. They carry the necessary equipment and medication to respond in an emergency. Our home birth program is backed up by the support of NSW Ambulance Service and the medical and midwifery teams at both The Tweed Hospital and Lismore Base Hospital if transfer is recommended.

Would you like more information?

If you would like to explore the option of home birth, please call the number below. Leave a message and a midwife will call you back.

Byron Midwifery Group Practice
(02) 6639 9580

*If you do not meet Medicare eligibility please contact a midwife to discuss private payment options.