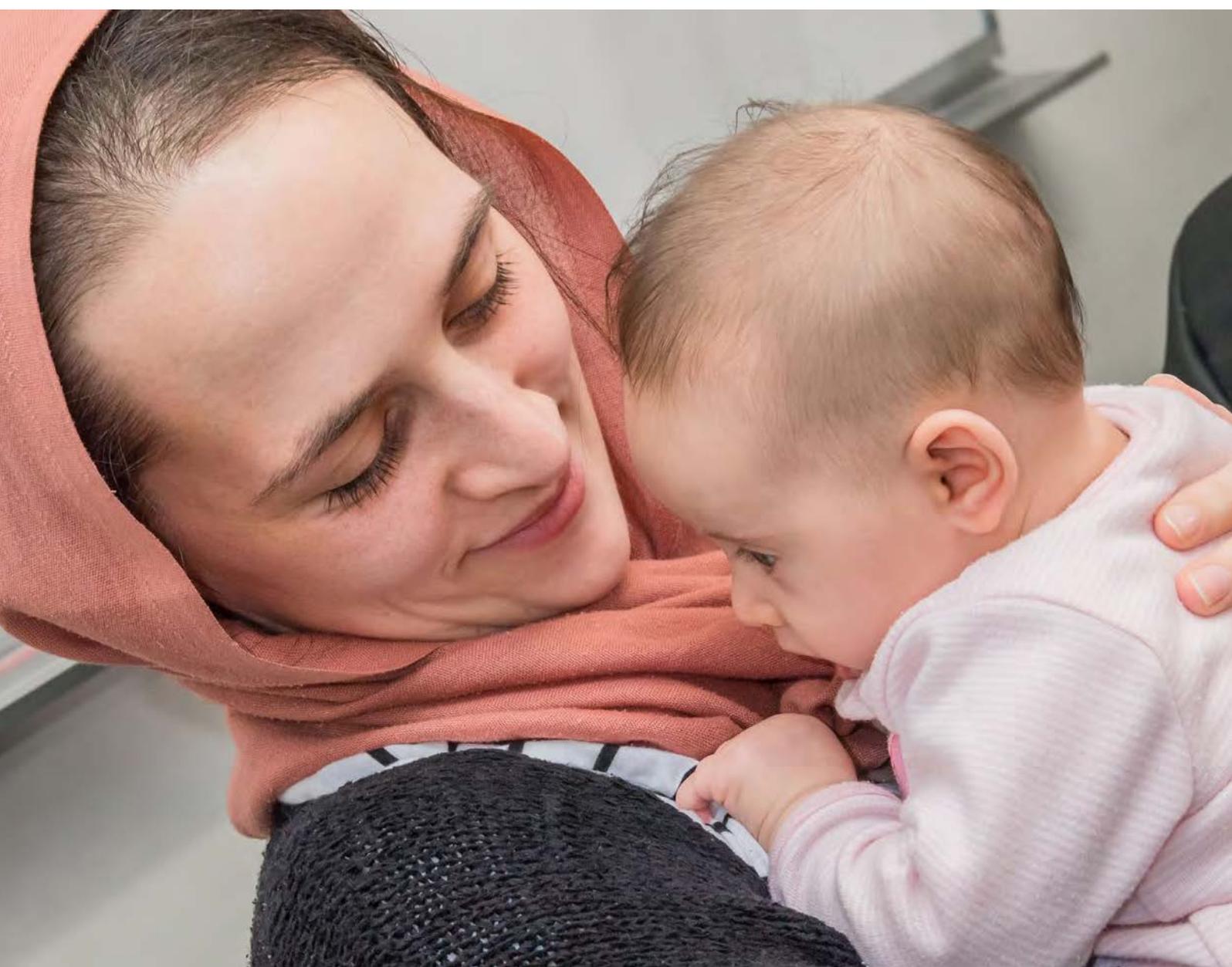




Sydney
Local Health District

Preparing for your baby's birth

Frequently asked questions





Acknowledgement of Country

Sydney Local Health District acknowledges that we are living and working on Aboriginal land. We recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of Aboriginal people on this land. We would like to acknowledge all of the traditional owners of the land and pay respect to Aboriginal Elders past and present.

Our District acknowledges *Gadigal*, *Wangal* and *Bediagal* as the three clans within the boundaries of the Sydney Local Health District. There are about 29 clan groups within the Sydney metropolitan area, referred to collectively as the great *Eora Nation*. *Always was and always will be Aboriginal Land*.

We want to build strong systems to have the healthiest Aboriginal community in Australia.

Together under the Sydney Metropolitan Partnership Agreement, including the Aboriginal Medical Service Redfern and in collaboration with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, Sydney Local Health District is committed to achieving equality to improve self-determination and lifestyle choices for our Aboriginal community.

Ngurang Dali Mana Burudi – A Place to Get Better

Ngurang Dali Mana Burudi — a place to get better, is a view of our whole community including health services, Aboriginal communities, families, individuals and organisations working in partnership.

Our story

Sydney Local Health District's Aboriginal Health story was created by the District's Aboriginal Health staff.

The map in the centre represents the boundaries of Sydney Local Health District. The blue lines on the map are the Parramatta River to the north and the Cooks River to the south which are two of the traditional boundaries.

The *Gadigal*, *Wangal* and *Bediagal* are the three clans within the boundaries of Sydney Local Health District. They are three of the twenty-nine clans of the great *Eora Nation*. The centre circle represents a pathway from the meeting place for Aboriginal people to gain better access to healthcare.

The Goanna or *Wirriga*

One of Australia's largest lizards, the goanna is found in the bush surrounding Sydney.

The Whale or *Gawura*

From June to October pods of humpback whales migrate along the eastern coastline of Australia to warmer northern waters, stopping off at Watsons Bay the traditional home of the Gadigal people.

The Eel or *Burra*

Short-finned freshwater eels and grey Moray eels were once plentiful in the Parramatta River inland fresh water lagoons.

Source: Sydney Language Dictionary



Artwork

Ngurang Dali Mana Burudi — a place to get better

The map was created by our Aboriginal Health staff telling the story of a cultural pathway for our community to gain better access to healthcare.

Artwork by Aboriginal artist Lee Hampton utilising our story.

Preparing for your baby's birth

When should I contact the hospital?

Before you're 37 weeks pregnant, call the hospital if:

- you think you may be going into labour or have any concerns. Some babies are born early or premature and may need extra support

After you're 37 weeks pregnant, call the hospital if:

- you're having contractions that are regular, getting stronger and closer together
- your membranes rupture (waters break). This could be a slight trickle or sudden gush of watery fluid from the vagina and may occur before or after labour contractions begin
- you have any bleeding (bright bloodstained fluid from the vagina) which is heavier than a normal mucousy, pink or brown 'show'
- your baby's movements have changed (stopped or decreased in number or strength)
- you have any concerns regarding your pregnancy or are feeling unwell



Our midwives answer the phones, 24 hours a day, every day of the year

For the Delivery Unit at RPA Hospital, call **9515 8420**

For the Birth Unit at Canterbury Hospital, call **9153 2135**

In an emergency, call 000 for an ambulance

Preparing to come to hospital

What should be in our hospital bag?

For the pregnant woman:

- **documents** your yellow card, birth preferences document (if relevant), Medicare card and health insurance details
- **clothing** comfortable clothes such as large, loose t-shirts, tracksuit (in winter) or shorts (in summer), dressing gown, warm socks
- **nightwear** with front-opening tops (which are more convenient for skin to skin and feeding your baby)
- **underwear** at least six pairs of high-waisted underpants firm enough to hold a sanitary pad and ice pack in place, maternity bras or a wire-free singlet with built-in support
- **footwear** comfortable, non-slip shoes such as thongs or slippers
- **toiletries** body wash, toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, lip balm, three (3) packets of maternity-sized sanitary pads and washable and/or disposable breast pads
- **pillow or towel** the hospital provides towels and pillows, but having your own can help you feel more comfortable
- **charger** with a long cable for your mobile phone
- **reading materials** including book or kindle, pen and paper
- **plastic bag** to take home wet or stained clothing



Don't bring any valuables or money. The hospital takes no responsibility for the loss of property, money or valuables.

For the partner or support person:

- **clothing** wear warm, comfortable clothes as the hospital is air conditioned. Bring a change of clothing if you plan to enter the bath or shower with the labouring woman
- **snacks** (tea and coffee-making facilities are available)
- **camera**

For the baby:

- **nappies** one pack of 54 newborn-sized nappies
- **clothing** four changes of clothing (singlets, long-sleeved onesies, socks) and one going home outfit
- **blanket** and at least four muslin wraps

The hospital provides baby wipes, wash and one outfit for the baby, but these cannot be taken home.



Arrange for someone to drive you and your baby home. You will need to have a baby capsule correctly fitted in your car. Please arrange this in advance.



On the day

How do I know it's time to go to the hospital?

Call your midwife or the hospital for advice. If it's time to give birth, they will invite you to go to the hospital.

- Call the **RPA Delivery Unit** on **02 9515 8420** or Birth Centre on **02 9515 6405**
- For the **Birth Unit** at **Canterbury Hospital**, call **02 9153 2135**.



Getting to RPA Women and Babies

What do I do when I get to RPA Women and Babies?

People visiting Women's and Babies, including those attending clinics, need to enter through the main hospital entrance on Level 5 (street level, Missenden Road) and take the southern lifts or stairs down to Level 3.

Check in at the reception desk. Give them your antenatal (yellow) card and complete the simple paperwork. Staff will direct or accompany you to the Delivery Unit or Birth Centre.

Is the hospital open 24 hours a day?

RPA Women and Babies is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. For access between 10pm and 6am, while the doors are locked for security reasons, press the intercom button to the right of the main entrance for access.

Is there parking available?

Urgent drop-off for birthing mothers will be located outside the southern entrance on Level 3, accessible using Gloucester House Drive.

Parking is available in the RPA Visitor and Staff Car Park. Access to the car park entry is via Hospital Road (off Carillon Avenue), Camperdown. Casual hourly parking rates apply. There are also privately operated car parks available in the surrounding area, and street parking (local council hourly parking rates apply).



Getting to Canterbury Hospital Birthing Unit

What do I do when I get to Canterbury Hospital Birthing Unit?

The entrance Canterbury Hospital Birthing Unit is via Tudor Street.

Check in at the reception desk. Give them your antenatal (yellow) card and complete the simple paperwork. Our staff will be waiting to take you to the Birth Unit.

Is the hospital open 24 hours a day?

Canterbury Hospital Birthing Unit is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. For access between 8pm and 7am, while the doors are locked for security reasons, press the intercom button to the right of the main Tudor Street entrance for access. When admitted to the building, go to the antenatal reception counter and ring the bell on the right-hand side of the glass window.

Is there parking available?

Two-hour parking is available in nearby streets.

Longer term parking is available underground at Canterbury Hospital (\$4.80 per 30 minutes, to a maximum of \$26 a day).

If you have a pension card, health care card or disability card please have your parking validated at the reception on level 3 to access concession rates (no cost for parking three hours or less, and a flat rate of \$5.60 for more than three hours)

Labour and birth

It is not unusual for a pregnant woman to have more than one admission before labour is fully established, especially with her first baby.

How many support people can I bring to the hospital with me?

We welcome up to three adults to support you for the duration of labour and birth. It's important to understand they play active roles in supporting the birthing woman and are not just 'visiting'. We advise not to bring children as support people, as there will not be any staff available to care for them while the birthing woman is in labour. If you have other children, please arrange adult supervision and care for them while you are in labour. If you have any questions, please talk to your Midwife or Doctor.

What happens when I get to hospital?

Your midwife will support and monitor you and your baby throughout your labour. In a private assessment room the midwife will:

- ask what's happening to you
- attach an identification (ID) bracelet to your wrist
- time your contractions
- check your temperature, pulse, breathing rate and blood pressure and measure your oxygen level using a monitor on your finger
- test your urine
- feel your stomach to check your baby's position
- listen to your baby's heart rate
- see how much your cervix has opened and to check the baby's position. This requires an internal examination, and will only be done with your consent

The midwife might ask an obstetric medical officer or another midwife to join the consultation.

After this initial consultation:

- if you're in the later stages of labour, you'll be encouraged to stay in the hospital and be supported by the midwife in the hospital until your baby is born
- if you're in the early stages of labour, you might be encouraged to return home and continue to receive support from the midwife via the telephone

It is not unusual to have labour assessments and return home for some time in the earlier part of labour.

Giving birth

What pain relief can I have during labour?

Normal labour pain is different for everyone. Our staff will work with you to find what works best for you. Many pregnant women like to continue with the natural and non-medical options they may have been using at home. This could include:

- creating a calm environment by, for example, dimming the lights
- relaxation, meditation or focussing techniques
- visualisation and positive imagery to help relax
- playing music as a form of distraction
- using movement to help manage pain and reduce the use of medication for pain relief
- calm, focused breathing, counting and vocalising
- massage
- acupressure or acupuncture
- aromatherapy
- hot or cold packs in areas of pain
- water, having a warm shower or bath
- using a trans-electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) machine
- water injections to lower back, performed by two midwives or obstetric staff members when in hospital

Pain medications sometimes requested by women may include:

- nitrous oxide (gas)
- opioids (strong, injectable pain killers)
- epidural



Understanding your pain management options and being prepared can help you make informed decisions. Royal Prince Alfred and Canterbury Hospitals offer parent education information sessions about labour, birth and parenting. For more information, go to:

slhd.nsw.gov.au/rpa/womenandbabies/parentEducation

slhd.nsw.gov.au/canterbury/maternity.html

Following birth

Women who are healthy and well may choose to return home between four and 24 hours after giving birth.

What happens after the baby is born?

After your baby's birth, they will be dried and placed on your chest for skin-to-skin contact. This means your baby will remain naked and lie on your chest, and you'll both be covered with a warm blanket. You can offer your baby a feed during this time. Around the same time, the umbilical cord will be clamped and cut. After skin-to-skin contact, and offering your baby a feed, the midwife will conduct a newborn check and offer to give your baby the first dose of Vitamin K and first vaccination. You and your baby will be monitored for a few hours to make sure you are both well.

Where do I go after giving birth?

The midwife will help you prepare to be transferred to the Postnatal Ward, which can take up to three hours. During this time, you or your support person can cuddle your baby.

You might choose to go directly home after the birth, and the midwives and doctors will support this choice if they know you or your baby don't need to be monitored and you have support at home.

Staying in hospital

How long can I expect to stay in hospital after giving birth?

Women who are healthy and well may choose to return home between four and 24 hours after giving birth.

Longer stays in hospital might be recommended if you have had a forceps or vacuum birth (12 to 48 hours) or birthed by caesarean section (48 to 96 hours), or if you or your baby require additional monitoring or care in hospital.

What facilities are available on the postnatal ward?

You are welcome to use the shared kitchenette and lounge area on the postnatal ward. All meals will be provided for you during your stay. Your partner will need to provide their own refreshments.

Can my partner or support person stay overnight on the postnatal ward?

If you are in a single room, we welcome your partner or support person to stay with you overnight on the postnatal ward. A single sofa bed or reclining chair will be provided. There will be a small fee, please speak to the midwife regarding potential costs.



Leaving the hospital

Who can I talk to about my new baby's growth and development when I go home?

When you go home, we encourage you to call the Sydney Local Health District Child and Family Health Service on 02 9562 5400. The Child and Family Health nursing staff will introduce you to the service and invite you to an appointment at your local service. Depending on you and your baby's needs, this introduction to the service could take place anywhere from a few days after you arrive home (if sustained home visiting is needed) to a few weeks.. The Child and Family Health Nurses can support you with parenting your baby and check baby's growth and development. They will also introduce you to other new parents in your area in a "New Parents Group".

Contact

For more information, go to:

slhd.health.nsw.gov.au/community-health/services

We recommend that you and your baby have a health check up with your GP when your baby is 6 weeks old. Your GP will also offer to vaccinate your baby.

When do I have a follow up appointment with my GP?

We recommend that you and your baby have a health check up with your GP when your baby is 6 weeks old. Your GP will check your health and recovery from pregnancy and birth and discuss your contraception plan. Talk to your GP if you have any concerns about your mood.

Your GP will assess your pelvic floor and can refer you to a physiotherapist if needed. Ask your GP about returning to exercise. If you birthed by caesarean, discuss whether you are ready to start driving again.

The GP will also check your baby's health, growth and development and will be able to offer your baby their 6 week vaccinations.

At home with a new baby

If you had your baby at RPA Women and Babies:

What support do I get from the hospital once I go home?

If you had your baby at RPA Hospital, the Women and Babies Unit can arrange for a midwife to visit you at home for up to two weeks after the birth of your baby.

- If you already have midwifery care arrangements through the **Midwifery Group Practice (MGP)** or **Midwifery Antenatal Postnatal Service (MAPS)** then your midwife will visit you at home for up to two weeks.
- If you don't have any midwifery care arrangements, RPA Hospital has a **Midwifery@Home service** through which a midwife can visit you at home for up to two weeks after your baby's birth. The service is scheduled around individual needs, and available to women who are eligible for Medicare and live within our local boundaries. If you are interested, your midwife will discuss your suitability for this service after your baby is born.

If you had your baby at Canterbury Hospital Birthing Unit:

What support do I get from the hospital once I go home?

- If you already have midwifery care arrangements through the **Midwifery Group Practice (MGP)** or **Canterbury Antenatal Postnatal Service (CAPS)** then your midwife will visit you at home for up to two weeks.
- If you don't have any midwifery care arrangements, Canterbury Hospital has a **Midwifery@Home service** through which a midwife can visit you at home for up to two weeks after your baby's birth. The service is scheduled around individual needs, and available to women who are eligible for Medicare and live within our local boundaries. **Midwifery@Home** is covered by Medicare. Those with no Medicare can be provided information about the cost of service. If you are interested, your midwife will discuss your suitability for this service after your baby is born.

What support can I get in my community?

Sydney Local Health District Child and Family Health Service can provide ongoing community support for you and your family. Nurses in the service specialise in well babies and children up to five years old and provide information and resources about infant feeding, sleep, normal growth, and development.

This service is free, and interpreters are available. To make an appointment with one of our Child and Family Health Nurses, please call the Child Health Information Link on 9562 5400.



What if I am worried about my health or my baby's health?

Talk to your partner, or someone else you trust if you have worries or fears. You can also talk to your doctor, midwife or child health nurse.

Postnatal services in your area

If you had your baby at RPA or Canterbury Hospital, and live outside Sydney Local Health District, the team can refer you to postnatal services in your local area. However, a referral doesn't guarantee your access to the service - you'll need to check with the service if they have capacity for you in their program.

Contact

For more information, go to:

slhd.health.nsw.gov.au/community-health/services/child-health-development#child-and-family-health-nursing

To talk to a registered nurse any time:

Call **Healthdirect** on **1800 022 222**

Available 24 hours a day

To talk to a maternal child health nurse:

Call the **Pregnancy, Birth and Baby helpline** on **1800 882 436**

Available 7am to midnight, 7 days a week

slhd.health.nsw.gov.au

Sydney,
it's *your* local
health district



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