

# Birth Unit



## Frequently asked questions for expectant parents

### Hospital tours and parent education classes

Canterbury Hospital is taking steps to protect our staff, our patients and our community against any potential transmission of COVID-19 (coronavirus).

We are limiting visitors to our hospitals and making changes to some of the services we provide.

Our Childbirth and Parenting programs, including maternity tours will **not** go ahead as usual. This information will be updated when tours become available. We will be hosting online Childbirth and Parenting education programs - register your interest at [slhd.nsw.gov.au/RPA/WomenAndBabies/parentEducation/default.html](http://slhd.nsw.gov.au/RPA/WomenAndBabies/parentEducation/default.html)

To book in to have your baby at Canterbury Hospital please call **9787 0250** or **9787 0560**.

Below are some frequently asked questions for expectant parents to help provide you with information in preparation for your birth at Canterbury Hospital.

### When should I contact the hospital?

Please contact the Birth Unit if you have any concerns or worries on **97870555** or **97870554**. Our phone is answered by midwives 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

If you are over 37 weeks pregnant, we advise you to call the hospital when or if:

- You are having regular contractions that are becoming stronger and closer together
- Your membranes rupture; this could be a slight trickle or sudden gush of watery fluid from the vagina (this may occur before or after labour contractions begin)
- You have any bleeding (bright bloodstained fluid from the vagina) which is heavier than a normal "show"
- Foetal movements have decreased or stopped
- You have any concerns regarding your pregnancy or are feeling unwell.
- If you are less than 37 weeks pregnant we advise you contact the hospital as soon as you have any signs of labour, decreased foetal movements or have any concerns about your pregnancy or health.

### What do I have to bring to hospital?

#### Birth Unit

#### Expectant women

- Comfortable clothes such as a large loose t-shirt, a short night dress, warm socks, underwear that is firm enough to hold a pad in place (patients often need to bring several pairs, especially once your waters break)
- Comfortable clothes for afterwards (tracksuit, shirts that button down the front, dressing gown and appropriate footwear such as thongs or slippers)
- Toiletries eg. body wash, toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, maternity pads and lip balm
- Water bottle with a straw attachment that you can sip during labour
- Snacks (jelly beans, barley sugar, fruit bars, etc.)
- Your favourite music on an iPod/ MP3 player/ phone
- Oil or lotion for massage
- Spray bottle for spraying cooling water
- Phone charger
- Camera
- Reading material, pen and paper

- Plastic bag to take home wet or stained clothing

### For Partner/Support People

- A change of clothes, as well as a jumper or jacket (as the Birth Unit is air-conditioned)
- Snacks, juice, alternative teas (we have tea and coffee-making facilities available)
- Pen, paper and a watch with a second hand can be useful
- Bathers (if you plan on entering the bath or being in the shower with the labouring woman)
- Small amount of cash (for example to cover parking meter costs)

### Postnatal ward

When you arrive at the postnatal ward, you will be supplied with a pack of essentials which will include one outfit change, a packet of wipes and baby wash (for the baby). Please note that the hospital clothing provided for your baby cannot be taken home and is to be left in the hospital.

We encourage you to bring in enough clothing and nappies for your baby for the rest of your stay in hospital. You will need to provide a going home outfit, wrap and blanket for your baby.

**It is suggested you bring the following items with you:**

#### Mother

- Nightwear, such as front-opening night dresses (which are more convenient for breastfeeding), dressing gown, shoes, slippers and comfortable casual clothes such as shorts and tops in summer and tracksuits in winter (footwear **must** be worn at all times)
- Maternity bras or a wire-free singlet with built-in support
- Comfortable high-waisted underpants (that can hold a large sanitary pad and an ice pack)
- Adequate supply of maternity pads (3 packets)
- Washable and/or disposable breast pads

- You may like to bring your own pillow or towel for your comfort.  
**Note:** these items are provided by the hospital and no responsibility will be taken for your personal items
- Small amount of cash  
**for example,** television hire
- Pen and paper

#### Baby

- One pack of newborn nappies (pack of 54) and wipes
- Four changes of clothing: singlets, long-sleeved onesies, socks, wraps (also known as muslin wraps) and a going home outfit and blanket

### What should I do with valuables?

We encourage you to leave anything of value, such as jewellery, at home. Canterbury Hospital will not accept responsibility for the loss of valuables or money.

### What do I do when I arrive at Canterbury Hospital Birth Unit?

Before coming to hospital, please ensure that you phone the Canterbury Birth Unit staff on **9787 0554 / 9787 0555** to seek their guidance.

**Please note** due to precautions relating to **COVID-19 (coronavirus)**, all access to the hospital is via the main entrance **Level 3, Thorncraft Parade, Campsie.**

Please present at the reception desk with your antenatal (yellow) card before being given access to the Birth Unit.

### Where do I park?

Two-hour parking spaces are available in streets surrounding Canterbury Hospital. There is also underground paid parking available.

**Casual rate:** \$7.60 per hour (maximum \$22 a day)

**Concession card holders:** 3 to 7 day passes available from \$11.30 to \$22.60 per pass.

**Map of Canterbury Hospital**

## What happens when I get to the Birth Unit?

Once you have arrived at the birth unit, you will be greeted by a midwife who will:

- put an ID bracelet on your wrist
- discuss what is happening to you
- check your observations - this includes your temperature, pulse, breathing rate, and blood pressure
- check your baby's position by feeling your abdomen
- measure your baby's heart rate
- time your contractions
- test your urine
- only as needed, perform an internal examination to see how much your cervix has opened and to check the baby's position.

**Depending on how you are progressing through labour you will either be encouraged to:**

- stay in the hospital where the midwife will continue to support and monitor you, your baby/babies and how you are progressing;

or

- if you are still in the early stages of labour, the midwife may make some suggestions and encourage you to rest at home and provide you with telephone support.

It is not unusual for some women to have more than one admission before labour is fully established, especially if this is your first baby.

## How many support persons can I have in the delivery ward?

In response to COVID-19, we are asking our patients to limit visitors to our hospitals.

**Only your partner or support person should be present with you in the Birth Unit.** They are also welcome to stay with you overnight as your labour progresses

## What pain relief can I have during labour while in delivery ward?

Normal labour pain is different for everyone, as is how you manage it. Many women aim for active births to help them cope with the pain of labour, and reduce the use of drugs for pain relief. There are many things you can try to find out what works best for you.

**Often women will continue using the non-pharmacological options they may have been using at home.**

**These may include:**

- Keeping the environment calm, for example dimming the lights
- Massage
- Relaxation/ focusing
- Acupressure/ acupuncture
- Aromatherapy
- Music to distract you from the pain of contractions
- Movement/ Positions- keeping active and changing positions
- Breathing Techniques and vocalising
- Hot packs in areas where you feel the most pain
- Use of visualisation- positive imagery to assist relaxation
- Water - having a warm shower or bath for 'buoyancy'
- TENS (trans-electrical nerve stimulation) machine
- Water injections to lower back - performed by two accredited midwives or obstetric staff members when in hospital

**However, sometimes women need medications during their labour.**

**These may include:**

- Nitrous oxide (gas)
- Morphine
- Epidural

For more information about different options and side effects, please refer to the **"Labour and Guide book"** or speak with your midwife or doctor.

## What happens after the baby is born?

Provided all is well, the baby will be given to you and placed on your chest for skin-to-skin contact. This means that your baby will remain naked and lie on your chest with a blanket covering both of you. Around the same time, the umbilical cord is clamped and cut.

After skin-to-skin and offering your baby a breastfeed, the baby will be taken for a newborn check. We will ask for your consent to give injections of vitamin K and Hepatitis B vaccination to your baby.

After this, the baby is often given to your partner or support person while the midwives help you get ready for transfer to the postnatal ward.

This process takes between 1 to 3 hours. In some instances, you may choose to go directly home from the Birth Unit. This will be supported if you are low-risk and we do not anticipate any complications for you or baby.

### **How long can I expect to stay at the hospital after giving birth?**

Women who are healthy and well may choose to return home early (within 4 to 24 hours) after giving birth.

A longer stay in hospital may be required if you had a forceps or vacuum delivery (12 to 48 hours), a caesarean section operation (48 to 72 hours), or if you or your baby require additional care in hospital.

It is important that you have help when you return home from hospital, irrespective of your hospital stay.

### **Postnatal visiting hours**

Under normal circumstances, there are no visitor restrictions on the postnatal ward.

To protect our patients, staff, and community against any potential transmission of COVID-19, we are asking our patients to limit visitors to either their partner or support person while on the postnatal ward. No other visitors will be allowed.

### **Can partners or support persons stay overnight on the postnatal ward?**

Canterbury Hospital Maternity welcome your partner or support person to stay with you overnight only when in a single room on the postnatal ward.

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

“Midwifery @ Home” is a service that offers postnatal care and support by Canterbury Hospital midwives in the comfort of your own home. This service is scheduled around your individual needs for up to 2 weeks after your baby’s birth.

This service is available to women who are Medicare-eligible and live within our local boundaries. If you are interested, your midwife will discuss your suitability for this service after your baby is born.

Following this, you can seek further support from your local Child and Family Health nurses.

