



# Where to Have Your Baby

## *Hospital, Home, Childbirth Center*

In the past, the only accepted place to give birth was in a hospital. But home births and free-standing birth centers are gaining in popularity. Where you choose to give birth depends on many things, such as your risk level, who your healthcare provider is and how involved you want your family to be.



**hospitals**

- Many hospitals have taken the changing interests of their patients into account and have developed more homelike atmospheres for laboring mothers.
- Many hospitals have labor/delivery/recovery units, which are decorated much like a bedroom with a large bed, mirror and chest of drawers.
- The end of the bed collapses to allow for pushing and the mirror allows the mother to see the birth.
- Some hospitals allow siblings or midwives to attend.
- Hospitals offer full medical facilities for most emergency situations including Caesarean and premature births.
- The nursery is nearby to care for the baby while the mother rests.
- Being in a hospital guarantees instant medical intervention if needed.
- Most hospitals offer prenatal and childbirth classes.
- Pain medication is usually available quickly if the mother decides she needs it.



**at home**

- Birthing at home offers a comfortable, familiar setting and a tremendous opportunity for bonding.
- It's less expensive.
- Parents have complete control over who attends the birth: parents, siblings, other relatives, friends.
- You don't have to change locations once labor begins, which can make the entire experience calmer and easier.
- There's no trained nurse or medical equipment at your home in case there's a problem.
- If you're considering a home birth, make sure you're no more than 20 minutes from the hospital and you can count on your transportation.



**birth centers**

- Birth centers may be near a hospital, but are usually in a separate building.
- The focus of birth centers is entirely on prenatal care, labor and delivery.
- Birth centers combine skilled clinical care with a homelike environment.
- Birth centers allow eating, drinking and using a tub or shower during labor as well as full family participation if desired.
- The rate of Caesarean births is lower in birth centers.
- Women are almost always attended by a midwife.
- Birth centers offer prenatal and baby care classes on site.
- Birth centers can't accommodate premature babies, women who have had Caesareans or any kind of high-risk pregnancy.
- The stay is relatively short, on average 12 to 24 hours.