



Right Birth - Your Choice

Where to birth your baby – your choices

Labour and birthing care is provided in a variety of public and private settings, including at home, standalone birth centres, birth centres attached to hospitals, and in hospitals.

The choice of where to birth is a step toward a healthy and happy start for both you and your baby.

Your birth place options

Giving birth in Australia is uncertain but not dangerous for the majority of women and is generally very safe for you and your baby. Most births, when properly assisted in a safe environment, will unfold without complication or need for intervention. In fact the World Health Organization states that 85% of births do not require intervention and there should be a valid reason to interfere with what is a natural process.

We know when a woman feels safe birth progresses as expected.

Birth at home

There are many advantages to giving birth at home.

Women in their home environment feel more comfortable and often safer. When in labour it also takes away the decision point of when to go to hospital. Oxytocin is very important to having a physiological birth and we know oxytocin levels are higher in women who birth at home. Women in a home setting are less likely to have interventions and their chances of having a normal vaginal birth are much higher. Furthermore, women who birth at home have a higher rate of success in breastfeeding.

If you birth at home you may be cared for by a midwife, a general practitioner or an obstetrician. If you birth with a midwife you are more likely to receive continuity of midwifery care.

We need to be mindful of the adage in Australia that we have tripped into. If there is a poor birth outcome and it happens at home, then it is considered preventable, but if it happens in hospital it is considered inevitable. There is no evidence to support this statement. For the well, healthy woman, her outcomes are all but identical to birthing in a facility.

Birth Centre

A midwife led place to give birth usually within a hospital, with a home-away-from-home environment. Worldwide research has shown that women having their first baby with a straight forward pregnancy who birth in a Birth Centre have the best outcome, such as the:

- best chance of achieving a normal birth as they are usually cared for by midwives who are trained experts in normal birth;
- least chance of having an emergency caesarean section or instrumental birth;
- least chance of needing an epidural;



- least chance of having an episiotomy;
- just as safe for your baby;
- more likely to have optimal cord clamping and skin-to-skin contact after the birth; and
- if you need extra help or a complication arises a seamless transfer is available to a doctor led service.

Birth Suite / Delivery Suite / Labour Ward

The doctor is the lead clinician who determines your care. The doctor usually will not stay with you throughout labour. Your labour will be monitored by midwives with the doctor/obstetrician usually attending the birth itself. The labour ward provides the option for epidural and induction.

Questions to ask yourself?

- Is birth at home right for you?
- Is the Birth Centre right for you?
- Is the Delivery Suite / Labour Ward right for you?