



## Right Birth - Your Choice

### What are the elements of Maternity Care?

Maternity Care in Australia refers to the health services provided to women, babies, and families throughout pregnancy, during labour and birth, and after birth. This care is provided to women from early pregnancy up to 12 months after birth.

It is important to understand that Pregnancy is not an illness. For most women they are well because pregnancy and birth are normal physiological life events.

The core elements of maternity care required to achieve a healthy pregnancy include:

- Maintaining the wellness of the woman.
- Monitoring the progress of the pregnancy.
- Providing education on pregnancy, labour, birth, post-natal recovery, breastfeeding and parenting.
- Monitoring the progress of labour and birth.
- Providing post-delivery care and postnatal care.
- Assessing the wellness of the mother and baby after birth
- Supporting the commencement of infant feeding – breastfeeding or other.
- Supporting your transitioning to parenting.
- Providing best level evidence clinical care and interventions when indicated.

While acknowledging that the majority of women are well, when the need arises you are entitled to timely, urgent and transfer to higher levels of care.

There are several care options available to you to look after your health and well-being and that of your baby/babies during pregnancy, birth and afterwards – these ways are called 'models of care'.

Sometimes, a midwife is the lead healthcare professional and at other times it is an obstetrician or another doctor. Sometimes, the responsibility is shared between obstetricians and midwives.

It is an essential part of maternity care that the health professional builds a relationship with you where mutual trust in one another's knowledge is critical. All health professionals have a role in ensuring that they provide care informed by the best level evidence in a respectful way and that you are enabled to be an equal partner in this process

Preferably your care is provided in continuity of carer model where the core elements required to achieve a healthy pregnancy is provided by one person or a small team.