

# Homebirth

Why home birth? (If you've decided to have a home birth then it's handy to know this sort of info for conversations with friends and family if you wish to tell them your plans (many prefer not to if they don't expect support).

Increased oxytocin being in a place that feels safe and private means

- A shorter labour
- Feeling more relaxed
- More comfortable labour
- Less chance of interventions
- Less likely to have a postpartum haemorrhage
- Increased chance of VBAC (Vaginal birth after caesarean)

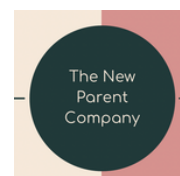
As well as that there are all these pros

- Less chance of getting an infection
- More comfortable for birth partner
- No limit to number of birth partners
- You can guarantee access to a pool via renting
- No need to sort childcare / pet care

It's generally very safe! Studies show that home birth is as safe as hospital for first time birthers and safer than hospital for second time birthers. There is thought to be an increase in poorer outcomes for baby but we must remember that this includes lower APGAR scores at birth (but actually baby is totally healthy).

## Equipment you may need

- Pool (if you want one)
- Towels
- Some shower curtains/  
tarpaulin -TENS machine
- Comb (for acupuncture) -  
Aromatherapy
- Candles
- Fairy lights
- Affirmations
- Clothes for baby
- Flannels
- Snacks
- Entertainment



## Things to consider

### Distance

The distance to the nearest hospital may be a factor for or against home birth, some people home birth to avoid a long journey to hospital and others opt against home birth as they have concerns about the distance if they were to transfer in an emergency. It's worth remembering that if you and baby were taken in by ambulance during an emergency the transfer would be faster than it would normally be in a car. Transfers to hospital from home births are much less likely to be because of an emergency though, the most common reason for transfer is at the request of the birther. This may be because they would like pain relief that is not available at home, they would like their labour to be augmented in some way or they just have a feeling they would like to be at hospital.

### Space

Do you have an area that you can use to birth? You can give birth in any size house, room etc. Many babies are born in small bathrooms and bedrooms. Basically if there's space to live there then there is space to birth there! Some people who live in shared houses for example and can't guarantee privacy and would rather go to an MLU instead.

### Childcare

Many people wish to have their children around them during their home birth and so don't have to arrange having children picked up etc. however they may still wish to have someone extra at hand to entertain the children if needs be. Others would like to have their children somewhere else and not have them there as a distraction, usually this just means having someone ready to pop by and get the children when they wake in the morning rather than getting them anywhere in the middle of the night so this is a common reason for having a home birth.

### Mess

One of the things people really worry about is the mess they will make at home. Home birth is really not as messy as you might think but it helps to be prepared with shower curtains, towels and blankets you don't mind getting a bit messy, it will probably wash off! The midwives will have incontinence sheets with them which they will put down to protect things if the placenta is delivered on the sofa for example. Lots of people layer up their bed sheets with mattress protector, sheet, mattress protector, sheet and then just strip off the top too layers to get rid of any mess before getting into a nice clean bed! The midwives will pack away all their incontinence sheet and help gather up things like messy towels etc. You'll be surprised how quickly it looks like nothing happened!



## Comfort Measures

At home there are not the same options of pain relief as more clinical settings and although these methods are rarely necessary due to increased oxytocin and endorphins, it can be useful to have other comfort measures at hand. A TENS machine, massage, aromatherapy (ensure pregnancy and baby safe) and water are all great relief. A birth pool is a lovely relaxing way to keep comfortable and can be great for keeping everything contained too! They are easily purchased or rented and easy to set up and pack away again. A simple shower can be a lovely way to keep comfortable as the sensation on your skin is a lovely soothing distraction.

Everyone is allowed a home birth

Many high risk people are still very safe to birth at home. Blanket policy does not fit everyone and policies can vary across the country. It is best to become informed and make your own decisions using the BRAIN tool and lots of research. If home birth is not safe for you and your baby then you will come to that conclusion and make the decision yourself. If you research your circumstances and feel that home birth is the best option for your family despite that being against your trusts recommendations then that is your right! You don't have to wait to have your home birth okayed by anyone if that's what you've decided on!

## Resources

Home Birth Support Group UK on Facebook (run by Samantha Gadsden- Doula)

Why Not Home? Documentary

Why Home Birth Matters- book by Natalie Meddings

Birth Kweens Podcast Episodes- All About Home Birth Parts 1-3 (episodes 103-105)

The Birthplace Cohort Study

