



Pregnancy and birth choices

Maternity Services
Patient Information

All trusts must ensure women have ready access to accurate information to enable their informed choice of intended place of birth, including maternal choice for caesarean section. We want to provide the highest and safest standards of care for mother and babies to encourage as straightforward a birth as possible. This leaflet explains the options available to help you make an informed choice.

If you are low dependency and your pregnancy is problem free you have the option of:

- **Home birth** with community midwives or continuity of care team
- **The Friarage Maternity Centre**, Northallerton (free standing midwifery led unit)
- **The Marton Suite** – midwife – led unit which is located next to a consultant led unit at The James Cook University Hospital
- Another obstetric or midwifery led unit of your choice

If you have a known medical condition or pregnancy complication, either in this or a previous pregnancy, you will receive high dependency care from doctors and midwives. You may also be advised to give birth on the central delivery suite at The James Cook University Hospital (James Cook) or another consultant obstetric unit of your choice if you remain high dependency.

The choices available to you

Home birth with your Community Midwife or Continuity of Care Team

Homebirth is an option for women who have an uncomplicated pregnancy

The 2011 Birth place Study, which reviewed 62,000 pregnant women, showed that homebirths are as safe as hospital birth for the second and subsequent babies in low risk pregnancies. First time mothers may also chose a home birth but there is a greater risk you may need to be transferred during labour to hospital. Midwives will review and identify any complications at each ante natal contact that may influence the need to change your chosen place of birth. All our community midwives and Continuity of Care Teams support home birth and will be happy to discuss the options with you.

Benefits:

- Comfortable familiar surroundings helping you feel more controlled and relaxed
- Individual midwife led care with experienced midwives
- Increases chances of having a normal birth with less intervention
- Partners and siblings can see the baby straight away and the family remain together after birth
- Decreased risk of infection.

Drawbacks:

- Limited medical facilities at home, though all midwives receive regular training to deal with emergency situation
- If problems arise before or after birth, you will be transferred to the consultant unit at James Cook in an ambulance with your midwife.

Friarage Maternity Centre (a free standing midwifery led unit)

The Friarage Maternity Centre offers comfortable relaxed environment for women and their partners, and is a good choice for women who are keen to have a natural birth with minimum intervention. We provide a 24 hour service, 7 days a week.

The unit is run by a team of enthusiastic, experienced and skilled midwives who provide friendly individualised care to women with straight forward pregnancies. Partners are welcome to stay in the en suite rooms during and after the birth until you choose to go home, usually within 24 hours.

The Birthplace study found that birth centres are just as safe as hospital for low risk women and increases the chance of a normal birth with less intervention.

Although there are no doctors available within the Friarage Maternity Centre, the experienced midwives and continuity of care teams will closely monitor the well-being of you and your baby during the labour, observing for signs that may indicate a potential complication. If they have any concerns they will arrange for you to be transferred to James Cook University Hospital by ambulance, and continue to care for you during the journey.

The teams at the Friarage Maternity Centre and James Cook University Hospital work very closely together to ensure you receive the best possible care in the most appropriate setting. If it is necessary to transfer you, the journey of 23 miles takes approximately 25 minutes by ambulance, and a midwife and paramedic will travel with you.

Benefits:

- Comfortable friendly surroundings helping you feel more controlled and relaxed
- Individual midwife led care with experienced midwives
- Increases chances of having a normal birth with less intervention
- Water birth available
- Good option if do not want a homebirth, but do not need an obstetric unit.

Drawbacks:

- If problems arise before or after the birth or you need an epidural, you will be transferred to the consultant unit at James Cook in an ambulance with a midwife.

The Marton Suite (Midwife led unit, next to consultant unit at James Cook)

The Marton suite provides midwifery led care to low dependency women. The ensuite rooms are designed for you to stay in throughout labour, birth and postnatally for up to 24 hours. Partners are welcome to stay.

It may be that women who would like to give birth in a midwife led unit, who are predominantly low risk but with a slightly more complicated history may use the Marton Suite. This is because it is very close to the consultant unit with more immediate access to medical care if required.

Benefits:

- Relaxed environment
- Individual midwife led care with experienced midwives
- Increases chance of having a normal birth with less intervention
- Water birth available
- Good option if do not want homebirth, but do not need an obstetric unit
- All services close by in high dependency unit if required.

Drawbacks:

- Transfer to central delivery suite (just next door) if problems arise either before or after birth or if epidural requested.

Central Delivery Suite

If you have a high dependency pregnancy or birth you may be advised to deliver in a consultant led obstetric unit where facilities for complications are more immediately available. Various forms of pain relief are offered including epidural

You may continue to receive some of your ante natal care locally with your midwife at your GP surgery and with consultants and midwives at the Friarage Maternity Centre but you will be advised to give birth at James Cook if you remain high dependency. All services are available for closer monitoring and caesarean section if required.

The option for place of birth will be discussed with you at your first booking appointment and all subsequent ante natal contacts throughout your pregnancy. Your midwife will help to guide you to the most appropriate and safest place to give birth

Patient Experience

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust would like your feedback. If you wish to share your experience about your care and treatment or on behalf of a patient, please contact The Patient Experience Department who will advise you on how best to do this.

This service is based at The James Cook University Hospital but also covers the Friarage Hospital In Northallerton, our community hospitals and community health services.

To ensure we meet your communication needs please inform the Patient Experience Department of any special requirements, i.e. Braille/ Large Print.

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