

Pregnancy During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Choosing a Place to Give Birth

You may be thinking about where you can safely give birth. To keep you and your baby safe, birthing places including hospitals have made many changes to the way they give you care. You should feel comfortable choosing a place based on your needs, health, and what is near you.

Where you decide to have your baby is an important choice. Use the information below to help you pick a place that is right for you.

Where Can I Give Birth?



In a Hospital

You might choose to have your baby in a hospital if this is where your doctor or midwife can care for you and you want to be close to medical care or want stronger help for pain, like an epidural. You will have to give birth in a hospital if you need medical care for certain illnesses like high blood pressure, your baby is in an unusual birthing position, or if you need a Cesarean (C-section) section. A doctor and midwife, and doula if you have one, will care for you in the hospital.



In a Birthing Center

Birthing centers offer care during pregnancy, birth, and after pregnancy. They may feel more like home than a hospital. You will be seen by a midwife and a doula if you have one. Most pregnant people who give birth here have low-risk pregnancies, meaning you don't have a medical conditions that will need to be cared for in a hospital. You might choose to give birth here if you want to have your baby with gentle help like breathing and massage but do not want strong medications. If you decide you want medication for pain like an epidural or if a serious health problem happens during birth, you will be taken to the hospital.



In Your Own Home

A home birth takes place where you live. You may be more comfortable having a baby in your own home. A midwife, and doula if you have one, will care for you. Like a birthing center, you might choose to give birth here if you have a low-risk pregnancy and want to have your baby with gentle help but do not want strong medications. If you decide you want medication for pain, like an epidural, or if a serious health problem happens during birth, you will be taken to the hospital.

What should I know when thinking about where to give birth?



- Your doctor, midwife, nurse, or doula may only be able to care for you at certain places. **Talk with them about** where they can care for you to help you decide **where you want to have your baby.**



- Your health insurance may only pay for you to have your baby at a hospital. **Call your insurance company** to find out what your choices are **for where you can have your baby.**

- Most hospitals and birthing centers offer an in-person or virtual (online) tour. **Take a tour of the places** you are thinking about having your baby **to see which one is a good fit for you.**



- If you are thinking about a home birth, **meet with your midwife or doula** to talk **about the care and support you would like** to receive during delivery.

- If you decide to have your baby in a birthing center or at home, have a plan in place in case you need to be taken to the hospital. Here are some things you will want to **talk to your midwife, and doula** if you have one, **about: which hospital** you will go to, **how you will get there, how long** it will take to get there, and **who can go with you.**



This publication is supported by the [Health Resources and Services Administration \(HRSA\)](#) of the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#), as part of an award totaling \$10,361,110.00. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.

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