

# Can anyone give birth at home?

The majority of home births occur after a normal, healthy pregnancy, with one baby who is head-down. If there are any other issues that occur in your pregnancy you can discuss these with your midwife.

Home birth is increasingly common for first babies. Some experts have said that a first labour is particularly suitable for home because if it does not progress smoothly there will be plenty of time for transfer to hospital, as labour is usually longer. Your midwife can discuss how long it would take an ambulance to reach you in an emergency, and any access concerns. The final decision about whether your home is suitable is yours alone.

Women give birth in homes of all shapes and sizes. It does not matter if your home is small, untidy or in need of decorating. **The important thing is that you feel comfortable there.**

Breast feeding support is available for you and your baby, and the peer supporters would be more than happy to visit you in your own home.

## More information is available from:

Colchester **01206 742369**

Clacton **01255 201600**

Harwich **01255 201224**

## Useful Links

**Breastfeeding Support 01255 202714**

**Supervisor of Midwives 01206 747474**

[www.colchesterhospital.nhs.uk/maternity.shtml](http://www.colchesterhospital.nhs.uk/maternity.shtml)

[www.northeastessex.nhs.uk/mslc](http://www.northeastessex.nhs.uk/mslc)

[www.thegoodbirth.co.uk](http://www.thegoodbirth.co.uk)

[www.birthworks.co.uk](http://www.birthworks.co.uk)

[www.homebirth.org.uk](http://www.homebirth.org.uk)

[www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk)

**NCT Home Birth Support 01206 393076**

[www.hypnobirthingcolchester.co.uk](http://www.hypnobirthingcolchester.co.uk)

[www.maternitytens.com](http://www.maternitytens.com)

[www.bootsmaternityrentalproducts.co.uk](http://www.bootsmaternityrentalproducts.co.uk)

[www.rcm.org.uk](http://www.rcm.org.uk)



Maternity  
Services  
Liaison  
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Colchester Hospital University   
NHS Foundation Trust

Having your baby at home?

Is it for you?





North East Essex

## Is it for you?

The Royal College of Midwives (RCM) and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) support home birth for women with uncomplicated pregnancies. They state 'there is no reason why home birth should not be offered to women at low risk of complications and it may confer considerable benefits for them and their families.'

*'There is ample evidence showing that labouring at home increases a woman's likelihood of a birth that is both satisfying and safe, with implications for her health and that of her baby.'*

Women who experience the joy of having their baby born at home in their own surroundings report an extremely positive experience which has a lifelong effect for both you, your baby and your partner.

Having a baby at home means that you are in familiar surroundings and may feel more relaxed and in control.

*Research suggests that for healthy women with a normal pregnancy the risks associated with home birth are no greater than those associated with delivery in hospital. Some studies in fact say home birth is safer as it minimises the risks associated with interventions.*

If you decide that this is right for you, all your care will be planned and discussed with you by a community or team midwife. She will be your named midwife and the subsequent care will be tailored to suit your needs with as much continuity of care as possible, as it is recognised that most women prefer to know who is caring for them.

## Coping at home

In preparation for your homebirth, the midwife will discuss ways in which she can support you and your birth partner and encourage you to write a birth plan.

Compared with women giving birth in hospital, women giving birth at home use less pain relief and experience fewer birth interventions. Dimming the lights, playing soft music, being in a warm and comfortable environment and 'nesting' helps to ease the discomfort of labour. Fear and anxiety make the contractions feel worse and it stands to reason that women who remain in their own environment often feel more relaxed and better able to cope in labour.

*Having a baby at home means that you are in familiar surroundings and may feel more relaxed and in control.*

Your birth partner/s and midwife will support you throughout labour. Extra strategies and coping skills to cope at home can include: moving around, massage, breathing techniques, hypnobirthing, TENS machines, having a bath. Eating and drinking during labour may help energise you and lift your spirits. Birth balls will allow you to bounce, rock or sway with the pattern of your labour. Home birthing pools are available, these can be used for delivery or for easing early labour.

Your midwife will discuss other forms of pain management at home, for example gas and air (entonox) and meptid, (an analgesia injection).



## Home birthing has a variety of benefits

Birthing at home can be a real family experience for all to embrace and celebrate. Your partner and family can remain with you as long as you want them to, and if you have other children it can be less disruptive to their lives. Homebirth places birth at the very heart of the family, and enables full family involvement. Women often report it as being a **more intimate experience**, more emotionally satisfying and feel they have more control. Women report some of the benefits as being able to use their own bathroom, make a cup of tea when they want and not having to travel to hospital. **Once the baby is born the real benefit is getting into your own bed to feed your baby and just being at home!**

## The birth partner's role

Most partners who have been present at home and hospital births say that they preferred the home birth, even if they had doubts initially. They are more likely to feel useful and that they have a definite role. You may be relying on your partner to provide practical support to a greater extent than in hospital because he/she will know where you keep the towels, baby clothes, and so on! If they are nervous about this, you could invite a friend to help out as an additional birth partner.

If your partner is worried about the safety of home birth, contact your local home birth support group to see if you could talk to other couples about their experiences. Your midwife may also be prepared to reassure your partner about your plans.

