

We continually strive to improve the quality of information given to patients. If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this information booklet, please contact

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Approvals:

Maternity Guidelines Group: November 2010, V3 May 2014, V4 Feb 2017

Divisional Board: December 2010, O&G SDU: V3 June 2014, V4 Feb 2017

MSLC: November 2010, V4 Feb 2017

Equality Impact Assessment: March 2011

Patient Experience Group: April 2011, V4 Apr 2017

How can I help to reduce Healthcare Associated Infections?

Infection control is important to the wellbeing of our patients, and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the main entrance of the hospital and at the entrance to every clinical area before coming into and after leaving the clinical area or hospital. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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If you require an interpretation of this leaflet please contact your community midwife.

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Buckinghamshire Healthcare **NHS**
 NHS Trust

Waterbirth

Patient Information Leaflet

If you require a translation of this leaflet please contact your community midwife

Safe & compassionate care,

every time

Waterbirth

Immersion in water during labour and birth is supported at Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust.

Immersion in water during labour can aid relaxation, ease pain, help women change position easily and reduce the need for additional pain relief.

Can I use the pool in labour?

We recommend that women using the pool:

- Are able to get in and out of the pool unaided
- Are expecting one baby which is cephalic (head down)
- Are in established labour without the need for intravenous oxytocin
- Have normal blood pressure, temperature and pulse
- Have no significant medical/obstetric conditions which may affect the labour, such as high blood pressure, pre-eclampsia, epilepsy, heart conditions, blood borne viruses

Additionally there must be no concerns about your baby's wellbeing in labour; the baby's heart rate must be normal and if your waters have broken the water (amniotic fluid) must be clear.

What happens during a pool labour?

Before entering the pool, your midwife will check that you and your baby are suitable for the pool.

- You can wear a bikini top or 'T' shirt if you do not want to be naked.
- The water will be kept at a comfortable temperature, below 36 degrees centigrade for the 1st stage of labour, then up to your body temperature for 2nd stage of labour.
- The water is kept at the level of your breasts when sitting down.
- It is advisable to take frequent sips of water to prevent dehydration.
- Entonox (gas & air) is the only pharmacological pain relief you can use in the pool. If you have had pethidine the pool can be used 2 hours after administration, as long as you are not drowsy.

- As your baby is born, you, your partner or the midwife should bring the baby to the surface face first as soon as possible. This must be agreed prior to the birth.
- You can have the umbilical cord clamped after one minute (delayed cord clamping) or wait until it stops pulsating if you have chosen physiological third stage.

At any time the midwife may ask you to leave the pool because of a problem and we would ask that you comply with her request.

When you have left the pool and the placenta has been delivered, the midwife will examine you to see if you need any stitches.

Can my partner enter the pool?

Partners can enter the pool with you. We request that they are appropriately dressed.

Can I use the pool if I am giving birth on Labour Ward?

In some situations it is recommended that the inflatable pool on Labour Ward is used. This is usually because you have a pregnancy or medical complication and Labour Ward has been recommended as the most suitable place for birth so that your baby's heartbeat can be continuously monitored. There is a wireless monitor that can be used in the inflatable pool for this purpose.

If you have any concerns about your own suitability please ask your Community Midwife.

Will a pool be available?

Sometimes you may plan to use a birthing pool but find that they are already occupied when you arrive in labour. It is therefore important to bear in mind that you will not always be able to use the pool.