

Lucina

Birth Centre



University Hospitals 
Coventry and Warwickshire
NHS Trust

We Care, We Achieve, We Innovate

What is a Birth Centre?

Birth centres are small maternity units which are staffed and run by experienced midwives. They offer a comfortable environment where birth is treated as a 'normal' process. At UHCW, the Lucina Birth Centre is located alongside the Labour Ward. It has been designed to feel more like home and aims to make you feel comfortable and relaxed.

What does the Lucina Birth Centre offer?

The Lucina Birth Centre offers you a safe place to give birth if you are assessed as 'Low-Risk.' This means the midwife has cared for you during your pregnancy and there have been no complications or medical problems. Your midwife will risk assess the progress of your pregnancy at each visit and will confirm that your pregnancy has been uneventful at your 36 week appointment. At this time you will be provided with the contact details of the Lucina Birth Centre.

You will come into the Lucina Birth Centre with your birth partner when you are in labour. You will be designated as LOW RISK when you go into labour if you:

- Have had an uncomplicated pregnancy
- You are 37–42 weeks in your pregnancy
- Your BMI is less than 35 at the start of your pregnancy
- You are 16-40 years of age
- You are not anaemic
- Your baby has developed normally and is head down
- Your waters break and they are clear in colour
- You have contractions that are regular and strong when labour starts

If at any point during your pregnancy the midwife has a concern she will inform you and may ask for the opinion of a consultant. If all is well you will stay LOW RISK, however if the problem means that your pregnancy needs further treatment or there might be a problem during labour you will be put under the care of a consultant - your pregnancy is then HIGH RISK.

What are the benefits of giving birth in the Lucina Birth Centre?

You will find that the approach to your labour and the birth of your baby is not medical. Midwives are trained to a high level to offer support and encouragement. A midwife is the best person to care for you when you have a normal low risk pregnancy and birth. The midwife will advise you on different ways to cope in labour such as using alternative positions, relaxations and water for labour. You will be in an environment that does not look like a hospital, for example you will even have control over the lighting in the room.

- **You will need less pain relief in labour** because of the support of the midwife, the environment you are in and the facilities available to help you through your labour.
- **You are more likely to be upright during labour and birth** as you will be encouraged to walk and move around. This helps in progressing your labour as lying on a bed is usually uncomfortable and does not make the most of gravity to aid your progress.
- **You are more likely to have a normal birth** because you will need less pain relief and are more likely to be upright and mobile, you will be doing everything to help yourself, giving you the best chance of having a normal birth.
- **You are more likely to have a water birth.** Pools are ready for you when you arrive if you wish to have a water birth. Being in water helps you to be in comfortable positions for labour.

- **You are less likely to need an episiotomy (cut to perineum).** We know that women who are active in their labour, when it comes to pushing their baby out are more likely to do this naturally without much help. This can reduce the pressure on the tissue and make a cut less likely.
- **You are more likely to establish breastfeeding** and breastfeed successfully if you have had a positive birth experience. Women using birth centres often describe their birth experiences as positive.
- **You can have more than one birth supporter if you wish.** Your family can be with you throughout the birth, but please check with the midwife first.
- **You will be able to have a partner stay with you** after the birth until you are ready to go home.
- **The environment of a birth centre gives women more positive birth experiences.**

How is the Lucina Birth Centre different to the Labour Ward?

Women who come to a birth centre have a good state of health so they are less likely to have problems during birth. All of our midwives are qualified, experienced, skilled and able to recognise when there is a problem and get the right help for you and your baby if needed.

It is important to know that the Lucina Birth Centre does not have doctors; they are based in our Labour Ward which is adjacent to the birth centre. We do not provide epidural anaesthesia or provide caesarean sections in our birth centre; these are provided in our Labour Ward for women who choose these options, or who have complications with their pregnancy or labours.



What if something goes wrong?

Most women who give birth in a birth centre do so without any problems. However, there are a few women who need to have their care under a consultant on the Labour Ward.

If there is a complication during your pregnancy you will be seen by a doctor. If this is likely to complicate your pregnancy or labour then you will give birth on the Labour Ward. If it is all right for you to continue to give birth in the Lucina Birth Centre, then you will come back to the midwives for your care.

A small percentage of women may experience difficulties during birth and so will be transferred to the nearby Labour Ward from Lucina Birth Centre to receive care from a consultant.

If your baby experiences any complications, we will perform all the necessary emergency procedures and ask for the help of the Neonatal Department.

After the birth of your baby

Normally you will stay in the birth centre for a couple of hours after the birth of your baby. The midwife will check that you and your baby are well and ensure you are happy with how your baby is feeding and responding to you. Once the midwife and you are happy she will give you information about who to contact if you have any concerns. You will receive ongoing care from a midwife when you get home, usually starting the next day. If you need to stay longer, once the birth is over you will be transferred to the postnatal ward where we have postnatal facilities. Most women are home within 6 hours if it is their first baby and quicker if they have given birth before.

What other options are available?

Lucina Birth Centre is for **LOW RISK** women.

Our model of care is **OPT OUT** which means all **LOW RISK** women will be booked for the Lucina Birth Centre.

If you do not want to give birth in Lucina Birth Centre you will be able to give birth at home or on the Labour Ward at UHCW. Please let your midwife know and she will discuss alternatives for you.

What happens now?

We are happy to meet with you and show you round the Lucina Birth Centre. If you choose to give birth in the Lucina Birth Centre your midwife will book you directly for the Birth Centre when she has done your booking history and will confirm it when you are 36 weeks pregnant. Your midwife will give you a number to contact when you go into labour and someone will advise you what to do next.

For more information please contact your Community Midwife or Midwife Alison Searle on 024 7696 7425 or email: alison.searle@uhcw.nhs.uk.

