



# Family Birth Center

WOMEN'S & CHILDREN'S SERVICES



## **WELCOME TO THE FAMILY BIRTH CENTER**

The birth of your child is a long-awaited, much-anticipated event that brings about new life — for you, your baby and your entire family. That's why our Family Birth Center structures its care to provide you and your family with the most positive birth experience possible, one that reflects your personal preferences and choices.

The following pages provide information about birth options, as well as details about classes, services, policies and other important material. Please read through this packet and refer back to it throughout your pregnancy.

## BIRTH OPTIONS

### Birthing Suites

At Mercy Family Birth Centers, you and your birth partner will experience labor and birth in one of our spacious and private birthing suites. All of our modern suites are decorated in warm, relaxing tones to help provide you with a peaceful setting. Rooms are equipped with the necessary medical supplies to ease you through the stages of labor and birth. Once you have given birth to your baby — and your newborn has been thoroughly examined — you may be moved to another room for the remainder of your stay. During the postpartum period (after recovery), you and your baby can begin getting to know each other while resting and recuperating. We encourage you to keep your baby in your room with you; however, excellent nursery care is available as well, should you desire a time of additional rest.

### Cesarean Births

If your baby enters this world by cesarean birth, you and your partner will be comfortably accommodated in the Family Birth Center. Whether or not your birth partner is present during the cesarean, he or she can enjoy special time with your baby immediately after the birth.

### Pain Relief

The birth of your child should be as pleasant and safe as possible for both you and your baby. Before your labor begins, discuss with your doctor how breathing and relaxation techniques can be used during childbirth and which, if any, pain medications you would like. You are encouraged to attend our classes Great Expectations and Anesthesia Options to find out more about your options for pain relief. Call 916.614.2229 (614.BABY) for details.

## EDUCATION CLASSES

To help you plan and prepare for childbirth — as well as child-rearing — Mercy hospitals offer a variety of educational programs held at several convenient locations. You are welcome to take classes at any Mercy facility, regardless of where you will be giving birth to your baby.

Taught by professionals, our programs include prepared childbirth, anesthesia options, baby care, breastfeeding, natural family planning, and several other topics. Take as many classes as you can, but note the course Great Expectations provides much more than breathing techniques for labor. Covering pregnancy through postpartum, it is valuable in preparing both you and your birth partner for the entire experience.

Our education classes are offered on an ongoing basis. Please refer to our *Expecting the Best!* brochure or call 916.614.2229 (614.BABY) for more information.



**Our birthing suites are decorated in warm, relaxing tones to help provide you with a peaceful setting.**

## HOSPITAL POLICIES

Your birth partner is welcome and encouraged to be with you during labor and birth at the Family Birth Center and is encouraged to help you. Family members are also welcome to visit during approved hours or situations, based on your individual needs. (When your nurse admits you, you will be informed about the Family Birth Center's current visiting policy. For the health and well-being of you or your baby, hospital staff may need to limit the number of visitors.)

If you would like your older child to attend the birth of his or her brother or sister, you must have a separate support person exclusively for the child.

Anyone who visits the Family Birth Center should be healthy and free of contagious disease (or recent exposure). We ask that visitors please wash their hands before touching or holding your baby, and for your baby's safety and health, other children who are outside of the immediate family should not visit. Out of consideration for our patients, visitors must comply with all hospital policies.

Your baby's security is very important. Hospital security procedures may include matching identification bracelets for mother and baby, visitor passes, video surveillance, staff identification badges and electronic infant security devices. Your nurse will explain more about security measures when you are admitted.

For your safety and comfort, all Mercy facilities are smoke-free environments.

To avoid dangerous accidents, electrical items — including hair dryers, curling irons, radios, razors, hot rollers and tape recorders — are not permitted. However, you may bring battery-operated appliances.\*

Please leave your jewelry, credit cards and other valuables at home. Limit any cash to less than \$20. The hospital cannot assume responsibility for any personal items.



**Your baby's doctor will be involved in many important decisions about the healthcare of your child.**

## CHOOSING A DOCTOR FOR YOUR BABY

Selecting a pediatrician or family practitioner before your baby is born is important. In the hospital, your baby's doctor will examine your newborn and give you instructions on caring for your baby. From this point on, your baby's doctor will be involved in many important decisions about the healthcare of your child.

To begin your search, ask friends or relatives about their children's doctors. Talk with your obstetrician or call our doctor referral network at 1.888.800.7688. Consider what is important to you and ask initial questions by phone, such as:

- Will this doctor accept my insurance?
- Where is the office located?
- What are some basic fees?
- What is the on-call policy?
- Is the doctor affiliated with the hospital in which I plan to give birth?

Choose two or three doctors and schedule an appointment to meet with each of them before you give birth. Here are a few things to consider during the visit:

- Is the doctor's personality compatible with yours?
- What are the doctor's child-rearing views?
- Is the waiting room "child friendly"?
- Is the office staff friendly, competent and caring?

When you have selected a doctor to care for your baby, include the doctor's name on your hospital forms. The Family Birth Center will contact the doctor when your baby arrives.

*\*For further information about electrical appliances (including laptops), contact the facility where you will be delivering or call the Mercy Women's Center.*

## WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU

It's a good idea to pack a suitcase and prepare for your hospital stay several weeks before your due date. An infant car seat is required by state law for your baby's ride home. Since the nursing staff cannot install your car seat for you, please be sure you take time before your baby is born to become familiar with your car seat and install it in your car **before** you come to the hospital. Free car seat checks are available by appointment through Mercy San Juan Medical Center and Methodist Hospital to anyone in the community. Please call 916.864.5779 for more information.

Some of the items you may want to bring with you to the Family Birth Center include:

- Light-weight nightgown (open-front if you plan to breastfeed)
- Underwear
- Bra (nursing-type if you plan to breastfeed)
- Socks and slippers
- Robe
- Going home outfit (loose-fitting, preferably a maternity outfit)
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Cosmetics (including lip moisturizer and body lotion)
- Shampoo/other toiletries
  
- Bed pillow(s) with brightly colored pillowcases
- Sour lollipops
- Playing cards, books, games
- Focal point objects
- Comfort and support items
- Quick energy snacks for birth partner
- Change for vending machines and parking
  
- Going home outfit and undershirt for your baby
- Blanket(s)
- Infant car seat
  - \* Please note: The hospital does not provide outfits or blankets for baby's trip home.
  
- Camera
- Insurance card
- Phone list and calling card for notifying family and friends

### Gather At-Home Medical Supplies

Put together your medicine chest now, rather than waiting until you need something. Always keep all medicines and medical supplies out of baby's reach and use only when advised by your doctor. The following items can usually be found at any pharmacy or drug store. Ask the pharmacist or your doctor for recommendations if you're unsure of brands or types.

#### For Baby

- Sterile cottonballs and band-aids
- Rubbing alcohol
- Medicine spoon, dropper or syringe
- Infant thermometer and KY Jelly for lubrication
- Acetaminophen
- Vaporizer or humidifier

#### For New Mom

- Sanitary napkins
- Stool softener
- Hemorrhoid medication
- Glycerin suppositories (for constipation)
- Acetaminophen
- DermaSpray or Tucks (for episiotomy relief)
- Other medical supplies I'd like to have on hand:

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An infant car seat for your baby's ride home is required by state law.

## EATING RIGHT

Along with prenatal care, eating right is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and your baby. There is no substitute for good nutrition and the health benefits it provides.

Always wash fruits and vegetables with warm, soapy water and rinse thoroughly before eating. Also drink plenty of fluids — at least eight glasses a day — like water, unsweetened fruit juice and non-fat milk. Don't skip the liquids, even if you're urinating frequently, because water and other fluids are important to you and your baby's health.

Avoid foods that are greasy, spicy or fried, as well as foods that contain few nutrients and are high in sugar, fat and calories. You should also avoid caffeine, which can be found in coffee, tea, cola and chocolate.

Do not eat raw or undercooked fish, eggs or meat as well as unpasteurized dairy products. These foods may contain germs that could cause illness or even death to an unborn baby. Don't risk the life and health of your baby. If you need to take a class or enroll in a program to stop smoking or using drugs, ask your doctor for advice or a referral *today*.

Finally, do not use any medications — including aspirin, Motrin or Tylenol — unless approved or recommended by your doctor. Over-the-counter and herbal remedies need to be used properly, so always check first with your doctor.



**In most cases, you will be able to hold and cuddle your baby immediately after birth.**

## YOUR STAY AT THE FAMILY BIRTH CENTER

### Checking In

If you are checking in during the day, come in through the main entrance. Please check with your hospital for information on entry after hours. Proceed directly to the Family Birth Center unless otherwise directed. The Family Birth Center staff will ask you a series of questions to complete the admission process.

If you come to the Family Birth Center during your pregnancy for a test or procedure — for example, an ultrasound or non-stress test — please follow your doctor's directions on where to go and how to check in.

### Labor and Birth

From admission through labor and birth, you will be cared for by nurses specially trained in childbirth. Because you may be in the hospital through shift changes or particularly busy periods, you may have more than one nurse. All hospital staff members will introduce themselves and show you proper hospital identification. You and your birth partner most likely will have finished your prepared childbirth class by now, and your nurse will support you and your family throughout the labor and birth of your new baby.

Your nurse will be watching closely over you and your baby. A fetal monitor may be used to allow your doctor and nurse to track and assess your baby's heartbeat. It can also be used to monitor your contractions.

There are several options for pain medications available to you. Please discuss pain relief with your doctor ahead of time. Your nurse will check with your doctor about updating medication orders to meet your needs.

In fact, your nurse and your doctor will communicate throughout your labor, and the hospital will already have copies of your prenatal examination information to address any special concerns, needs or treatments. Your progress will be evaluated periodically, and when it's time to give birth to your baby, your doctor and nurse will guide you through the process. A specially trained nurse and respiratory therapist will be available for every birth.

In most cases, you will be able to hold, cuddle and breastfeed your baby immediately after birth. Holding your baby "skin to skin" can provide warmth and closeness. The nurse will examine the baby and can help you get breastfeeding off to a good start. We encourage mothers to begin breastfeeding within the first hour after birth.

Labor and birth are more fully discussed in our *Great Expectations* class. This course will be extremely valuable to you and your partner. Topics include labor and birth, the role of the birth partner, relaxation and breathing techniques, cesarean birth, postpartum care and the rights and responsibilities of maternity patients and healthcare providers. (Please refer to our *Expecting the Best!* brochure or call 916.614.2229 (614.BABY) for course description and registration information.)

If you wish to take photographs during labor and birth, we request your understanding in first asking permission from staff members — to ensure the health and safety of you and your infant are not jeopardized at any time. If you are interested in making a videotape, please contact the Family Birth Center where you will be giving birth and the staff will be happy to explain their current videotaping policy.

Your doctor will recommend your length of stay in the hospital after birth, based on the health status of both you and your baby. In most cases, a cesarean birth will require a longer recovery period than a vaginal birth.

## TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR NEW BABY

If all is well with you and your baby, your newborn may room-in with you. Rooming-in is the best way to get to know your new baby, but should you feel the need for additional rest, nursery care is also available. It is okay to rest and nap during the recovery and postpartum periods, but for safety reasons, please do not sleep with your baby in your bed. Place your newborn in the bassinet when you feel sleepy. Also use the bassinet if you would like to take your baby for a walk.

After you have given birth and had the opportunity to recover for a few hours, you and your baby will be moved to one of our postpartum rooms where you will stay until you are discharged from the hospital. This postpartum period is a special time for families to bond with their babies. Try to rest as much as possible. Too many visitors can be tiring for new mothers and babies, so it is a good idea to limit the number and length of visits from friends. And remember, family or friends should not visit if they are sick or have had a recent illness.

We want you and your baby to have quiet time together with as few interruptions as possible and will try not to disturb you. Because we respect your privacy, you will have fewer visits from the nursing staff during postpartum than you had during labor. However, we will certainly be checking on you and your baby and helping you learn about taking care of your baby and yourself. Our capable nursing staff is always available to answer questions or assist you with any special needs. Your blood pressure, uterus and vaginal bleeding will be checked frequently. After recovery, you may eat and drink as you desire. Your baby's health will also be supervised by nurses as well as the baby's own doctor (see *Choosing a Doctor For Your Baby*, page 2.)

All babies will receive a Newborn Hearing Screen. This screening will take place before you and your baby leave the hospital. The screening is done while your baby sleeps. It is safe and painless and takes about 20-30 minutes.

Because breast milk is best for your baby, and nursing is good for you, we encourage you to begin breastfeeding within the first hour after birth. A nurse can assist you, and lactation consultant services are available for breastfeeding help. Assistance and literature are also available for mothers who choose bottle feeding.

The Family Birth Center has many videos and teaching materials that provide additional information about diapering, bathing, swaddling, feeding and caring for your newborn. These materials are available in a number of different languages. Please ask for these anytime during your stay with us. In addition, your in-room television includes a variety of helpful information.

### Benefits of Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding has many advantages for mother, baby and the entire family. Here are a few:

- Breastmilk contains every nutrient necessary for baby's growth and development
- Breastmilk is easily digested and efficiently utilized
- Breastfed babies have fewer allergies, ear infections, colic and upper respiratory infections
- Breastmilk provides immunities that protect babies from other illnesses
- Breastfeeding mothers may find it easier to lose those extra pounds following childbirth
- Breastfeeding offers an excellent opportunity for mothers and babies to develop a special closeness
- Breastfeeding is convenient and the milk is free

We encourage mothers to breastfeed their babies and we have developed a comprehensive breastfeeding support program, including educational classes, individualized advice, lactation consultant services, breast pump rentals and support groups. For more information, please call 916.614.2229, or refer to our *Expecting the Best!* brochure.

## GOING HOME

Both you and your baby will need to be formally discharged by your doctors. Most likely, your doctor will examine you in the hospital several hours after you've given birth to your baby. The Family Birth Center will automatically call your baby's pediatrician or family practitioner after the birth. The doctor will examine the baby in the hospital before ordering discharge instructions.

### At Home

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to call your doctor or your baby's doctor after you've gone home with your new baby. It's very important that the care you received before giving birth to your baby continues beyond the actual birth experience. And your baby's doctor will now be starting an ongoing health record for your baby.

You will want to continue keeping your baby safe and secure at home. The National Center for Missing and Exploited children discourages newspaper birth announcements, lawn signs, balloons and other things that call attention to the presence of a new infant in the home. For more information, visit [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com) or call 1.703.274.3900.

Please be sure you take time before your baby is born to be thoroughly familiar with your car seat and install it in your car before you come to the hospital. Free car seat checks are available by appointment through Mercy San Juan Medical Center and Methodist Hospital to anyone in the community. Please call 916.864.5779 for more information.

It is never too soon to "babyproof" your home. And always use your car seat!



**Newborns who need specialized, intensive care may be transferred to one of two Neonatal Intensive Care Units within Catholic Healthcare West's Sacramento service area.**

## WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

### Specialized Care

Most pregnancies and births go as planned. But should there be a need for special medical treatment, a number of services are readily available through our Family Birth Center, including:

#### Neonatology Services

Mercy's neonatologists — doctors who specialize in the care of premature and critically ill newborns — are available around the clock to care for your baby during and after birth. If possible, your baby will remain at the hospital in which you gave birth. Newborns who need specialized, intensive care may be transferred to one of two Neonatal Intensive Care Units within Mercy's Sacramento service area — Mercy San Juan Medical Center in the North area or Methodist Hospital in Sacramento's southern suburbs. Both NICUs are equipped with technologically advanced equipment and specially trained staff to care for infants who are premature or seriously ill. Our team of neonatologists serves the entire region, so your baby will continue receiving excellent, specialized care from the same group of doctors.

#### Perinatology Services

For various reasons, certain pregnancies are considered "high-risk" and require special care. Perinatologists are doctors who specialize in pregnancy-related problems, such as those related to diabetes. At the Family Birth Center, perinatologists participate in the care of high-risk patients prior to and throughout birth and postpartum. Outpatient services are available.

#### Social Services and Child Life Specialist

These specially trained staff members help patients on an as-needed basis. For example, teenage moms-to-be may require special attention during the birth experience. Or a patient might need help understanding medical procedures or doctor recommendations. They can comfort and provide information to new moms whose babies may need surgery or special care.

## For Your Health and Well-Being

The Mercy hospitals provide a full range of women's and children's services that offer care for all stages of life — from prenatal care to pediatric services, to support and education for women. Services include:

*Mercy Women's Center* — promotes the health and well-being of women of all ages by providing educational and support services within a holistic framework including physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and intellectual components. Programs encompass a wide variety of health and wellness topics.

*Perinatal Recovery Network* — offers individualized counseling and group support to help women in the childbearing years stop using drugs and alcohol.

*Sweet Success* — helps women lower the risks associated with diabetes in pregnancy, improving the health and well-being of both mother and baby.

*Mothering of Mothers CPSP (Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program)* — offers health education, nutrition and social support to low-income pregnant women who might otherwise be unable to access needed classes, resources and care.

*Infant Developmental Clinic* — provides follow-up care for premature babies discharged from the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Neonatologists and other specially trained staff perform developmental and physical exams at periodic intervals.

*Pediatric Concentrated Care Units* — offer care for seriously ill children who need constant observation, monitoring or complex treatment. Pediatric intensivists and sub-specialists help care for these children.

*Especially for Nursing Mothers* — offers comprehensive breastfeeding support for mothers, including classes in preparation and how to manage breastfeeding and work; individualized advice; lactation consultant services; breast pump and nursing accessory sales and rentals; support groups; and a lending library with a wide variety of books and videos.

*Fertility Care Services* — guides participating couples through an introductory session on the effectiveness of the Creighton Model of natural family planning as a means through which to achieve or avoid pregnancy, followed by a series of individualized teaching appointments with a professionally trained practitioner.

*Gynecologic Services* — includes a full range of health services for women, from infertility services to the management of menopause. Traditional gynecologic surgery is offered, as well as newer advanced surgeries that are minimally invasive. In addition, a full range of cancer services is offered.



**The Creighton Model is a means through which a couple may either achieve or avoid pregnancy.**





Mercy

A member of CHW

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