



MY MATERNITY JOURNEY IN SOUTH WEST LONDON

Helping you decide where you want your care

Having a baby is a huge moment in a woman's life. Your local NHS would like to make sure you get the maternity care you want, in the place you want, whenever possible.

This leaflet summarises the main options available to you in south west London and will help you decide your preferences.

Your midwife will discuss your medical history and any previous births with you, as this may affect what is recommended for you.

The NHS organisations in south west London have come together to support you and your family and make sure you are able to make a decision which is right for you. These are listed on the back page.



Before your baby is due (antenatal)

Every woman is entitled to antenatal care. You will be offered a range of appointments and tests (see pages 12 and 13). If you have a complicated pregnancy, you may need more appointments or tests than are shown on these pages.

You may find it helpful to **tick these boxes** as you go through your pregnancy to show the care you have received.

- Seven to ten appointments with your midwife, GP or obstetrician (a doctor who specialises in pregnancy and birth).
- Blood tests to identify your blood group and check for various illnesses or genetic blood disorders. These include HIV, syphilis, hepatitis B, anaemia (low iron), sickle cell and thalassaemia.
- Ultrasound scan (when you are 11 to 14 weeks pregnant) to confirm your expected due date. This scan can be combined with blood tests to screen for genetic conditions including Down's, Edwards' and Patau syndrome.
- Ultrasound anomaly scan (18 to 20 weeks) to check your baby's growth. This is also the scan when your baby's sex may be determined.
- The opportunity to meet your health visitor before you have your baby.
- Whooping cough vaccine. This is usually given between 20 and 38 weeks.
- Flu vaccination. This is given during the flu season, as soon as possible after the vaccine becomes available (usually September), but may be given up until the end of March depending on availability.
- Parent education. Antenatal classes are offered to parents with information that will help prepare you for birth and parenthood.
- Information on feeding your baby.

Ways of maintaining wellbeing in pregnancy include:

- Eating a healthy, balanced diet.
- Taking time out for yourself – doing something you enjoy.
- Talking to someone about how you are feeling.
- Gentle, daily exercises.
- Asking for practical help such as with childcare or shopping.
- Meeting other pregnant women at local groups/ activities; ask your midwife or Children's Centre what's on locally.
- Medical experts recommend that if you're pregnant or planning to become pregnant, the safest approach is not to drink alcohol at all. Drinking in pregnancy can lead to long-term harm to your baby.
- The risks of smoking during pregnancy are serious. Stopping smoking is the best possible thing you can do for your baby. Speak to your GP or midwife for advice.
- Don't feel guilty if you feel low when you are expected to be happy; be kind to yourself – many women experience these feelings. If you are worried about your feelings, speak to your midwife or GP for advice as they can tell you about local services that can help you.
- If you feel you would like some support to maintain a healthy weight during your pregnancy speak to your midwife or GP for advice.



Labour

- This leaflet will help you decide where you would like to give birth to your baby. One or more options may be recommended to you but you may wish to choose a different option – it is your pregnancy and your choice.

My birthplace choices

1 Birth at home or in a midwife-led unit

is recommended for women who have a straightforward pregnancy and no complications.

2 **Birth in a delivery suite** is recommended for women with health conditions or known problems with their babies, but this may not be the ideal environment for all women.

You may wish to change your mind about your choice of birthplace if your circumstances change. If you develop complications, you may need to consider changing where you have your baby.

Wherever you choose to give birth in south west London, you will have access to the right expertise from our highly skilled and experienced staff in appropriate modern facilities. We want to ensure you receive the best quality, safe care during your pregnancy and birth.

Core services

- Antenatal care in the community
- Antenatal ward
- Birthing pools
- Birth rooms
- Consultant care
- Home birth option
- Midwife-led care
- Neonatal care
- Option for partner to stay overnight
- Postnatal care in the community
- Postnatal ward
- Private room hire

continued overleaf...

My birthplace choices (continued)

Expert care

- **Midwife-led** care for women with access to a highly experienced team of midwives 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- **Increased consultant care** for women who require more complex care and support
- **Experts** from different areas of healthcare and other health professions as required
- **Support** for women who choose to have their babies at home
- **Modern facilities**
- **Birthing centres** which include rooms with birthing pools
- **Delivery suites** (these are sometimes referred to as labour wards) with specialist maternity theatres
- **Recovery areas** for women who have given birth in theatre
- **Special Care Baby Units and intensive care units** for babies requiring continuous medical and nursing care due to prematurity or complex needs

Choice of care

- Choice of where you give birth: at home, in a birth centre or delivery suite
- Choice of where you have your antenatal and postnatal care: in hospital, children's centres or in health centres



Home birth

Home births are a popular choice for some women. They are suitable for women who have an uncomplicated pregnancy and want to give birth in familiar surroundings with support from midwives.

The 2011 'Birth Place in England Study' focused in particular on birth outcomes in healthy women with straightforward pregnancies who are at 'low risk' of complications. Research showed:

- For second and subsequent babies, home births are just as safe as hospital births for the baby. They are also safer for the mother, because her chances of needing a caesarean section or other medical intervention are lower. (For example, the likelihood of having a caesarean birth is four times less than in hospital).
- For women expecting their first baby, birth at home seems to slightly increase the chance of problems for the baby though the overall risks are still low.

If there is a problem during labour, you will be offered a transfer to hospital, accompanied

by your midwife. Just under half of all first-time mothers transfer from a home birth to hospital during or after labour. However, only around one in ten women require a transfer who have given birth before.

Speak to your midwife if you are considering a home birth.

You can also find out more about home birth at www.nhs.uk

Reasons to consider

- You want to maximise the likelihood of having a straightforward birth and avoid medical interventions.
- You can enjoy your own surroundings and comforts – your own bed and bathroom for instance – to help you relax and be as comfortable as possible, without the need to interrupt labour to go to hospital.
- You are more likely to be cared for during labour by a midwife that you know.



Birth centre

Birth centres are staffed by midwives and are particularly suitable for all women with straightforward pregnancies, including first-time mothers. The emphasis at any birth centre is on creating a calm 'home-from-home' environment, which helps labour to progress better. Birth pools are available and encouraged.

Midwifery-led Unit

Located at a hospital which also has a delivery suite. Hospitals in south west London offering this service:

- Croydon Hospital
- Epsom Hospital
- Kingston Hospital
- St George's Hospital
- St Helier Hospital

In the 2011 'Birth Place in England Study', research showed:

- For first time mothers, 60 per cent will not need to transfer to a delivery suite from a birth centre.
- If you are having a straight forward pregnancy, birth centres are just as safe for babies as delivery suites, and significantly safer for the

mother, because the likelihood of you needing a caesarean section or other medical interventions is much lower. For example, women who start their labour in the birth centre are 50 per cent less likely to have a caesarean birth.

- This applies even if the mother moves from the birth centre to a delivery suite during labour.

If a problem occurs during labour, the mother will be offered a move to the delivery suite, accompanied by her midwife.



Available support in labour:

- Birth pool
- Gas and air
- TENS machine (pain relief involving the use of a mild electrical current)
- Pethidine or similar pain relief

Find out more about birth centres at www.nhs.uk

Reasons to consider

- You want to give birth in a homely environment.
- You want to be able to have a water birth.
- Smaller units with additional support from midwives.
- Opportunity for partners to be more involved.
- You want to maximise the likelihood of a straightforward birth and avoid medical intervention.



Hospital birth

Women who have any complicating factors which might reduce the chances of a straightforward labour will be recommended to have their baby in a delivery suite, where doctors are available to help if needed. This will be discussed throughout your pregnancy.

You will have your own room to give birth in. Delivery suites are found in:

- Croydon Hospital
- Epsom Hospital
- Kingston Hospital
- St George's Hospital
- St Helier Hospital

Available support in labour:

- Birth pool
- Gas and air
- TENS machine (pain relief involving the use of a mild electrical current)
- Pethidine or similar pain relief
- Epidural (pain relief injection)

Find out more about giving birth in hospital at www.nhs.uk

Some birth centres or delivery suites may offer complementary therapies to support you in labour. You will need to make enquiries at your chosen facility as to what is on offer and whether there is an additional charge.

Reasons to consider

- You have complicating factors which mean that the birth is less likely to be straightforward.
- Your baby may need special care immediately after birth.

After your baby is born (postnatal)



After your baby is born, you and your baby should receive the following care. You may find it helpful to **tick the boxes** to show the care you have received.

- Newborn examination within the first 72 hours after birth.
- Newborn hearing screening.
- Postnatal care – carried out by your community midwife. This may be in your home or in a clinic setting according to your needs.
- Baby's blood spot screening – a small sample of blood usually taken by your community midwife or maternity support worker to check for some possible genetic problems (around day five).
- Feeding support is provided – this may be by midwives, maternity support workers or health visitors.
- Vitamin K by injection or oral supplement for your baby.

Spending as much time skin-to-skin with your baby after birth may help you and your baby to develop a close relationship.

Breastfeeding

Your breast milk is perfectly designed for your baby and provides protection from infections and diseases. Breastfeeding provides health benefits for you and also helps a bond to build between you and your baby. There is also evidence of long-term health benefits to babies from breastfeeding.

My maternity journey

a handy guide showing what to expect when



As soon as you know you are pregnant, see your GP or self-refer (online) to the hospital of your choice. You should receive your booking appointment before ten weeks.

Consider where you want to have your baby:

- Midwife-led unit
- Home
- Hospital

Ask your midwife for a maternity exemption certificate to benefit from free prescriptions and NHS dental treatment.

Routine blood tests.

Ultra-sound scan, also known as the dating scan (around 12 weeks).

There are foods you should avoid when you are pregnant – visit www.nhs.uk for the latest guidance.

Always check with your GP, pharmacist or midwife before you take any medicines.

Visit www.Start4life for tips on keeping yourself well during pregnancy.

Ask your midwife for a MAT B1 certificate (after 20 weeks). This confirms your pregnancy for your employer.

Book your antenatal classes – your midwife will give you details.

If you're out of work or on a low income visit www.gov.uk to see what benefits you are entitled to.

Routine blood tests.

Ultra-sound scan (around 20 weeks) to check your baby's growth.

You will also have the option to find out the gender of your baby.

You will be offered:

- Whooping cough vaccination
- Seasonal flu vaccination
- Oral glucose tolerance test for women at risk of gestational diabetes
- Screening for HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B

Prepare your hospital bag
Prepare your birth plan – you'll get the information you need from your antenatal classes or midwife.
Check out what you'll need for feeding your baby and prepare yourself now.

Routine blood tests.

You will be offered anti D treatment if you are rhesus negative.

Visit www.nhs.uk to get advice on common health problems during pregnancy.

Shortly after your baby is born, you'll be given a personal child health record (PCHR). This usually has a red cover and is known as the "red book".

Vitamin K (see page 11).

Physical examination (within 72 hours).

BCG vaccination.

You will be seen at home by your midwife after which, a Health Visitor will visit you at home to help you, your family and your new baby stay healthy.

Register the birth within 42 days – visit www.gov.uk for details.

Newborn hearing screen. Heel prick test, which tests your baby's blood for nine rare, but serious, health conditions.

A hearing screen will also be carried out if you had your baby at home.

If you were due for a cervical screening test while pregnant, this should be rescheduled for at least 12 weeks after the birth.

For more information visit www.nhs.uk and search for screening tests for you and your baby. Your urine and blood pressure will be checked at each antenatal appointment.



KEY:

- General
- Looking after yourself
- Scans, screening and tests for your baby.

Please use this page to note down anything you would like to discuss with your midwife.

What is important to me during my pregnancy?

What is important to me after my baby is born?

What is important to me for my baby's birth?

Do you have any other questions for your midwife?

Croydon Health Services NHS Trust

Croydon University Hospital
530 London Road
Croydon
CR7 7YE
Tel. 020 8401 3000

Booking details:

Referral/ self-referral

At Croydon Health Services, we'll be with you every step of the way, offering you help and advice throughout your pregnancy, care and reassurance when it's time to give birth and all the guidance you need as you embark on parenthood.

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/maternity

Place of birth

- Midwifery Led Care/ Birth Centre
- Dedicated Home Birth service
- Obstetric Led Care/ Delivery Suite

Specialist services

- Neonatal intensive care unit
- Fetal medicine service
- High risk labour ward
- Specialist help for women with HIV
- Specialist support for women with mental health issues
- Diabetic service
- Clinic for women with a history of previous loss or early pregnancy – Early Pregnancy Unit
- Support for women who have had female genital mutilation (FGM)

- Support for women who have had caesarean section but want a natural birth
- Teenage pregnancy clinic
- Raised body mass index (BMI) support
- Support for pregnant women with heart disease
- Renal and sickle cell referral centre
- External Cephalic Version (ECV) breech clinic – attempting to turn a baby from a breech position to a head down position
- Aromatherapy (coming soon) and alternative pain relief
- Breast feeding support

Car parking at Croydon Hospital

Car parking is free for people with a valid blue badge. There are drop off zones near the main entrance, maternity, Woodcroft Road entrance and day surgery. There are two free 30-minute parking bays behind the Day Surgery Unit (DSU). Special permits are available for birth partners of women in labour.

Epsom & St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust

A full range of maternity services are delivered across our two sites at Epsom and St Helier hospitals.

St Helier Hospital
Wrythe Lane
Carshalton
Surrey SM5 1AA
Tel. 020 8296 2542 (for appointments)
Tel. 020 8296 2872 (antenatal clinic midwife)

Epsom Hospital
Dorking Road, Epsom
Surrey KT18 7EG
Tel. 01372 735367 (for appointments)
Tel. 01372 735735 Ext 6566 (antenatal clinic midwife)

Booking details:

Referral/ self-referral

Our experienced midwifery teams are here to help you have as an enjoyable pregnancy and birth experience as possible, and to guide you in making the choices that best fit your needs.

We are proud to be an accredited Baby Friendly maternity unit, recognising our high standards in encouraging and supporting new mums to bond with their babies and make the best personal choice in how to feed their newborn.

www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk

Place of birth

- Midwifery Led Care/ Birth Centre
- Dedicated Home Birth service
- Obstetric Led Care/ Delivery Suite

Specialist services

- Neonatal intensive care unit
- Fetal medicine service
- High risk labour ward
- Specialist help for women with HIV
- Specialist support for women with mental health issues
- Specialist diabetic service

- Clinic for women with a history of previous loss or early pregnancy – Early Pregnancy Clinic
- Support for women who have had FGM
- Support for women who have had caesarean section but want a natural birth
- Teenage pregnancy clinic
- Raised Body Mass Index (BMI) support
- Support for pregnant women with heart disease
- Sickle cell service
- ECV breech clinic – attempting to turn a baby from a breech position to a head down position
- Birth choices clinics and consultant midwife support
- Aromatherapy (coming soon)
- Amenity rooms and some en-suite bathrooms

Car parking at Epsom and St Helier Hospitals

The hospital has dedicated patient and visitor parking at our hospitals. Parking fees apply. Concession parking is also available for those meeting the criteria. Parking bays are available for blue badge holders.

Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Kingston Hospital
Galsworthy Road
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey KT2 7QB
Tel. 020 8546 7711

Booking details:

Referral/ self-referral

Here at Kingston Maternity Unit, our philosophy of care is to put women and families at the centre of our service. We aim to make every birth special and ensure your hopes and expectations are met in this special experience.

www.kingstonmaternity.org.uk

Place of Birth

- Midwifery Led Care / Birth Centre
- Dedicated Home birth service
- Obstetric Led Care / Delivery Suite

Specialist services

- Neonatal intensive care unit
- Fetal medicine service
- High risk labour ward
- Specialist help for women with infectious diseases including HIV
- Specialist support for women with mental health issues
- Specialist Diabetic service
- Clinic for women with a history of previous loss or early pregnancy – Early Pregnancy Unit
- Support for women who have had FGM
- Support for women who have had caesarean section but want a natural birth
- Service for young parents
- Nutritionist support for women with raised or low Body Mass Index (BMI)
- Support for pregnant women with heart disease
- Early Pregnancy Unit

- Renal and sickle cell referral centre
- ECV breech clinic – attempting to turn a baby from a breech position to a head down position
- Multiple pregnancy service – Twins or Triplets
- Pre Term Surveillance clinic
- Day Assessment Unit
- Antenatal education classes (including wellbeing classes: Birth & Beyond, yoga and infant feeding)
- Maternity Triage (24 hour)
- 24/7 anaesthetic service for epidurals
- Transitional Care ward – for mothers and their baby's who need enhanced care, but not within the neonatal unit
- Infant feeding support service / antenatal education and colostrum harvesting
- Awarded Unicef Baby Friendly accreditation
- En-suite bathrooms

Car parking at Kingston Hospital

Parking at the hospital site is very limited and you should allow yourself plenty of time to find a parking space. At busy times, there may be queues for spaces. The hospital has pay and display car parks on site for patients and visitors. The charging period for the car park is from 8:00am to 8:00pm, seven days a week. Blue badge holders can park in any visitor car parking space except staff parking areas. Registration with the hospital is required:

carparking@kingstonhospital.nhs.uk

St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

St George's Hospital
Blackshaw Road
Tooting
London SW17 0QT
Tel. 0208 725 1710

Booking details:

Referral/ self-referral

At St George's we offer choice in where to have your baby including a dedicated home birth team, a midwife-run birth centre on site and a delivery suite with extended consultant cover. As a result St George's is one of the safest units in the country to have your baby and was recently rated as outstanding for effective care by the CQC.

www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/service/maternity-services

Place of birth

- Midwifery Led Care/ Birth Centre
- Dedicated Home Birth service
- Obstetric Led Care/ Delivery Suite

Specialist services

- Neonatal intensive care unit
- Fetal medicine service offering Non-Invasive Prenatal Testing (NIPT)
- Labour ward with extended Consultant hours
- Dedicated Maternity Dependency Unit
- Day Assessment Unit for monitoring pregnancy
- Specialist support for women with mental health issues
- Specialist help for women with infectious diseases including HIV
- Dedicated service for women with a history of pregnancy loss

- Support for women who have had FGM
- Support for women who have had caesarean section but want a natural birth
- Support for young parents
- Multi-disciplinary team supporting women with wide range of medical conditions in pregnancy
- Specialist care for women with body mass index (BMI) including healthy lifestyle planning
- Renal and sickle cell referral centre
- Hypertension in pregnancy clinic and specialist service for women affected by growth restriction or preeclampsia
- Multiple pregnancy service
- Service to support smoking cessation, including carbon monoxide (CO) monitoring and nicotine replacement
- Specialist input for pregnant women with physical and sensory impairment by occupational therapists, infant feeding specialist and Midwives.
- Enhanced breastfeeding support and dedicated infant feeding team
- Birthing pools

Car parking at St George's Hospital

Car parking is pay upon exit. Parking is free between 10:00 p.m. and 06:00 a.m. Free disabled parking is available.

Services to support your health in pregnancy

Health improvement services

- **Stop Smoking Service**
www.nhs.uk/smokefree
- **Do the best for you and your baby – hints, tips and videos**
www.nhs.uk/start4life

Parent education

Parent education may be available through your NHS Trust or private providers – please ask your midwife.

Breastfeeding support

- **Breastfeeding help and support on NHS Choices**
www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pregnancy-and-baby
- **Start4Life breastfeeding support**
www.nhs.uk/start4life/breastfeeding
- **Croydon local breast feeding support groups**
www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/services/Breastfeeding_support/Local-Breastfeeding-Support-Groups.htm
- **Epsom and St Helier infant feeding support**
www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk/infant-feeding
- **Kingston maternity breastfeeding support**
www.kingstonmaternity.org.uk/you-and-your-baby/infant-feeding/breastfeeding.aspx
- **St George's breastfeeding support**
www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/service/maternity-services/

Many voluntary sector organisations provide breastfeeding support. Please ask your GP or midwife for more information about the support available in your area.

Bottle feeding

If you are planning to bottle feed with expressed breast milk or infant formula, there are lots of tips at nhs.uk that will help keep your baby safe and healthy.



Mental health support

Pregnancy and childbirth are big life-changing events and can bring about many emotional and psychological changes. Many women will experience positive mental health in pregnancy and following delivery. However, it is common to feel 'baby blues' in the first few days after delivery and some women may develop ongoing mental health problems, such as anxiety or depression. When you see your midwife, health visitor or GP, they will ask you questions about your mental as well as physical health in order to ensure you receive appropriate care and support.

IAPT talking therapies:

Croydon: 020 3228 4040 www.slam-iapt.nhs.uk/croydon/how-to-access-the-service/

Kingston: 020 8339 8040 www.kingstonwellbeingservice.org

Merton: 020 3823 9063 www.thinkaction.org.uk/get-help/addaction-mental-health-services/miapt

Richmond: 020 8548 5550 www.richmondwellbeingservice.nhs.uk

Sutton: 0800 032 1411 www.suttonuplift.co.uk

Wandsworth: 020 3513 6264 www.talkwandsworth.nhs.uk

A leaflet explaining how local IAPT services can help you if you are experiencing emotional difficulties is available at: www.swlccgs.nhs.uk/documents/help-and-emotional-support-during-pregnancy

More information and useful websites for your pregnancy

- **NHS Choices pregnancy and baby guide**
www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/pregnancy-and-baby-care.aspx
- **Pregnancy, birth and beyond for dads and partners**
www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/dad-to-be-pregnant-partner.aspx





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Croydon Hospital

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk

Epsom Hospital

www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk

Kingston Hospital

www.kingstonhospital.nhs.uk

St George's Hospital

www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

St Helier Hospital

www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk