



**University Hospitals Birmingham**  
NHS Foundation Trust



**Welcome to University  
Hospitals Birmingham  
NHS Foundation Trust's  
Midwife-Led Units**

**Building healthier lives**

**UHB is a no smoking Trust**

# Welcome to our Midwife-Led Unit (MLU)

**Good Hope Hospital MLU** – 0121 424 7204

Ward 4, Rectory Road, Sutton Coldfield, B75 7RR



## Birthing facilities

Midwives are the lead professional for women with uncomplicated pregnancies and skilled experts in protecting the optimum environment for labour and birth.

The Midwifery-Led Unit (MLU) offers an environment that supports the physiology of the birthing process. The rooms are designed to help you relax, because relaxation encourages the release of natural pain-relieving hormones.

Choice of birthing aids include birthing pools, mats, birthing cubes and stools to encourage active birth. These enable women to move around in labour and adopt birthing positions that they find helpful.

Strategies to help women cope with the pain of labour include compassionate and attentive midwifery support, gentle massage, use of water for labour and/or birth. Pain relief options include Entonox (gas and air) and pethidine (a strong pain killer).

## Philosophy of care

On our midwife-led unit midwives recognise that birth is an 'everyday miracle' and every birth experience is unique.

The midwives work in partnership with women and birthing people to provide holistic, individualised woman centred care to support their needs and wishes, whilst respecting their culture, background or religious belief.

We believe in giving the woman space to listen to her body and intuition, whilst still being there to support her both physically and emotionally if required.

We aim to provide a welcoming supportive and caring environment for women planning to give birth in this 'home from home' setting. The focus is to ensure that all women and their families we care for feel safe, respected, confident and empowered to be totally involved in all aspects of their care.

**\*\*where the word woman is written this is intended to denote and include all women and birthing people who do not self-identify as women**

## Frequently asked questions

### Who can give birth on UHB's MLUs

Our midwife-led unit is the recommended place of birth for all healthy women with uncomplicated pregnancies.

This means the MLUS are suitable for you if:

- You are between 37–42 weeks pregnant when labour starts
- You are having a single baby (not twins)
- This is your first baby, or your previous babies have been born vaginally
- You or your baby have no medical conditions that may affect the birth.

For women who do not meet the criteria, but who want to labour and birth in the midwife-led unit individualised plans can be made with a consultant obstetrician and/or consultant midwife.

Your community midwife will discuss this option with you during your pregnancy.

### **What are the benefits of giving birth on the MLU**

Women who have straightforward pregnancies and plan to give birth on an MLU are less likely to have interventions during labour such as an unplanned caesarean birth and birth assisted with forceps or ventouse (suction cap), with no increase in the chance of their babies being seriously unwell. Women also report a greater feeling satisfaction with their care birth experience.

**Further information on your decision for place of birth**



### **How many birth partners can I have with me?**

Two birth partners can be with you to support you when you are in labour. If you have a doula supporting you, they would be counted as one of your birth partners. The midwives will work in partnership with your birth supporters to enhance your birth experience.

### **Can children come to the MLU?**

Due to safety, no children are permitted while you are in labour. However, following your birth your children (siblings of the baby only) will be welcome to visit between the hours of 2pm–4pm and 6pm–8pm. Please note that children must be accompanied by an additional adult and not left in the care of the patient themselves.

## **What facilities do you have on the MLU?**

Both MLU's have pools, mats, birthing cubes and stools to encourage active birth. You are welcome to bring your own birthing ball in with you.

## **Can I bring my own music in?**

The MLU's have bluetooth speakers that you can connect your phones to so that you can listen to your preferred music.

## **How will you listen to my baby's heartbeat?**

We will listen to your baby's heart beat every 15 minutes in the first stage of labour when your cervix is opening up / dilating and every 5 minutes during the pushing stage of labour.

If it is recommended that your baby's heart rate is continuously monitored this can only be performed on the delivery suite. We have wireless monitors (telemetry) there which means women can still go in the pool / stay upright and mobile.

## **What happens if there is a concern during my labour either with myself or my baby?**

If there is a concern with either you or your baby during labour or after the birth or you or your baby need additional monitoring, your midwife will recommend that you are transferred to delivery suite where the doctors are. You will be transferred to the delivery suite either on a wheelchair or on a transfer bed via the lifts.

Although uncommon emergencies can occur during labour and birth. These may require immediate access to medical advice and advanced resuscitation facilities to ensure the best possible outcome for you and your baby. Midwives are trained to respond to these emergencies and will transfer you to delivery suite for ongoing care.

## **What happens after I give birth in the MLU – can I stay in the room?**

Most women are ready to go home within 4–12 hours following a straightforward birth and will be discharged directly from the MLU.

You will generally remain in the room you have given birth in until you are discharged home. If you or your baby need additional care you will be transferred to the postnatal ward for ongoing care and monitoring.

### **Who do I tell if I want to use the MLU and what point will I know if I can definitely use it?**

Please speak to your community midwife or consultant obstetrician (if you have one) if you would like to give birth on the MLU. Your midwife or a member of her team will discuss your birth preferences with you at 32–34 week and at this point she will let you know if you meet the criteria to use the MLU. If a concern arises in your pregnancy as it continues, such as developing high blood pressure, which means you are no longer suitable for the MLU this will be discussed with you at the time (please see question 1).

### **Can I have a tour of the MLU before I give birth?**

Tours of the MLU are available on request. This will provide an opportunity to see our facilities, meet some of the team members and ask lots of questions. We recommend contacting your chosen MLU to arrange a tour from 34 weeks. The MLU midwives will aim to contact you by 36 weeks to invite you in for a tour and birth preferences discussion if they haven't heard from you.

### **Is the MLU ever not available as an option to women who chose it?**

Our midwifery led birth units may not be available during very busy times. If this is the case when you are in labour, please be reassured that midwifery-led care will be available on our delivery suites, where there is also access to birthing aids and birthing pools.

Please be reassured that your birth preferences will be respected and supported in ALL our birth settings.



# Have you heard about **B.R.A.I.N.S?**

You may feel overwhelmed with the amount of information and choices available to you on topics such as screening tests for your baby, vaccinations, pain management, medication, procedures or any care recommendations.

**Think B.R.A.I.N.S!** This communication tool can empower you to ask questions, build trusting relationships with your team and make informed decisions.

**B**

## **B is for Benefits**

What is the benefit of having this procedure or intervention?

**R**

## **R is for Risks**

What are the risks of this process or intervention for me and my baby?

**A**

## **A is for Alternatives**

What are the other options available to you?

**I**

## **I is for Intuition**

What do you feel is right for you? Listen to your gut.

**N**

## **N is for Nothing**

What would happen if you did nothing? Even just for an hour.

**S**

## **S is for Second opinion**

It's okay to ask for a second opinion!



## How did we do? 😊 😐 😞

If you have recently used our services we'd love to hear about your experience. Please scan the QR code or follow the link to share your feedback to help us improve our services. **Thank you.**

**[www.uhb.nhs.uk/fft](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk/fft)**



## Accessibility

To view this information in a different language or use text-to-speech reader visit **[www.uhb.nhs.uk](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk)**, click the yellow and black circular icon in the bottom right of the web page to open the ReachDeck toolbar and then use the search bar to search by the name of the leaflet. If you require this information in another format such as braille or audio please email **[interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk)**



---

## Maternity

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham  
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston  
Birmingham, B15 2GW  
Telephone: 0121 371 2000

---