



The birth of your child is a joyous and intimate experience to be shared with those closest to you. It comes as no surprise then, that like some women, you may wish to give birth in the comfort and privacy of your own home.

There are many factors to consider when planning to give birth at home, and you must be aware that your plans may need to be reconsidered at any time during your pregnancy, labour, birth or following the birth of your baby if complications arise.

Registered health practitioners (both doctors and midwives) in South Australia typically don't advocate home birth, but may support you to have a planned home birth if you meet the selection criteria. Government employed midwives who participate in a planned home birth must adhere to the SA Health Planned Birth at Home Policy.

If you also decide to have a water birth at home, then the registered health practitioners attending you must follow the SA Health Policy for First Stage Labour and Birth in Water.

For more information:

Department for Health and Ageing South Australia SA
Maternal & Neonatal Clinical Network
Women's & Children's Health Network
Regional Office, 77 King William Road North
Adelaide, SA 5006 <http://www.cyh.com>



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Government
of South Australia

SA Health

Planned home birth

Is planned home birthing
right for you?



Patient information brochure

Is it right for me?

Supporters of home birth argue that a familiar home environment offers a sense of security and comfort, meaning less stress for you and your baby.

Research has shown women feel a greater sense of self-determination and freedom from the pressure and restraints of a hospital birth. The presence and involvement of their partners and close family to participate, reassures them throughout the whole process.

Critics of home birth are concerned home births carry a greater degree of risk than a hospital birth. Complications can arise unexpectedly and the urgent medical treatment needed may not be available at home.

Home or Hospital?

While much has been written about home birth versus hospital birth, there's little evidence for women and babies deemed to be of low risk to develop complications before and after the birth, whether at home or in hospital.

Complications can arise even in a normal pregnancy, but extra care is needed to select women who are suitable for giving birth at home.

Under the care of skilled registered practitioners, planned home births can be achieved safely. But even if everything goes to plan, some women and babies will need to be transferred to hospital because of complications that occur before, during or after the birth of the baby

You can only consider and plan to give birth at home if all of the following applies to you:

- You have a normal pregnancy with only one (1) baby
- You are more than 37 weeks but less than 42 weeks pregnant
- Your baby is head down in the womb before labour starts
- You have no medical reason preventing a home birth
- You have not had a previous caesarean section
- You are attended by two (2) registered health practitioners, including a registered midwife experienced in home birth
- Your support people for the planned home birth have met the registered practitioners during your pregnancy
- You remain alert and fully conscious
- You do not want to have pain killers or an epidural during labour
- You are not feeling anxious or overly stressed
- You are ready to accept the midwife's advice when transfer to hospital is needed
- Your home is safe and risk free for the planned home birth
- Your home must have easy access; in case an ambulance is needed
- You have, or are prepared to subscribe to, ambulance cover
- You live less than 30 minutes from a support hospital
- You have support at home, particularly for the first 24 hours after the birth and for the first few days after giving birth
- You have been informed about the SA Health Planned Birth at Home Policy
- You have read this brochure, discussed it with your registered midwife and signed the *Consent Form for Planned Home Birth MR82HB* (provided by your registered midwife)

Your GP or registered health practitioner will tell you if there is any condition or reason that would exclude you giving birth at home.

