The Women’s Centre
John Radcliffe Hospital
The Spires
Midwifery Led Unit (MLU)
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The Spires Midwifery Led Unit is on Level 7 of the Women’s Centre at the John Radcliffe Hospital. Midwives and support staff in the Unit offer care during labour and immediately after birth for healthy women with uncomplicated pregnancies. All care is led by midwives. There are no doctors present in the Unit.

What is the purpose of the MLU?

Women who come to the MLU to have their baby will be offered a personal and family-centred service. There will be a strong emphasis on skilled, sensitive and respectful midwifery care.

Our aim is to provide a safe, relaxed and informal environment where women are encouraged to move through their labours at their own pace. The staff encourage normal childbirth by recognising, respecting and safeguarding normal birth processes.

We cannot offer epidurals, induction of labour, or care for women with medical complications. Midwives are trained to deal with any unexpected emergencies and will monitor you and your baby regularly throughout labour. If complications develop, or if you need an epidural, you will be taken to the John Radcliffe Delivery Suite where you will be under the care of a consultant.

Facilities

The MLU offers women individual midwifery support throughout labour. All our midwives are skilled in helping women give birth with as little ‘high tech’ help as possible.

The MLU has 3 birthing rooms, one with a pool. Our aim is to provide a comfortable, relaxed, home-from-home environment. The rooms contain bean bags, birth balls and other equipment
to help you feel comfortable and secure. We welcome and value the presence of partners and/or birth supporters, and will try to work with everyone present so that you have a positive birthing experience.

**Working with pain**

The birthing rooms at the MLU are designed to help you relax and promote the release of your natural pain-relieving hormones. We can also provide additional support such as TENS, wheat bags, aromatherapy, massage, water, gas and air and/or meptid (an injection). Women are encouraged to labour in whatever positions they feel most comfortable, making use of furniture and equipment in the room.

**Postnatal Care**

Staff in the MLU are committed to helping mothers breastfeed their babies and will help you to learn this skill. They will also provide individual support to mothers who choose to feed their babies with infant formula.

**Visiting times**

Visiting times are the same as the other wards:

- 9 am - 9 pm for partners
- 3 pm - 9 pm for other visitors

Please note: To minimise the risk of infection, only the children of either the mother or her partner may visit (i.e. the new baby’s siblings).
**Going home**

We expect most women to be ready to go home between 2 and 24 hours after the birth.

Your baby must travel in an appropriate car seat – this is a legal requirement. Please make sure you bring the baby’s car seat with you when you come into the unit.

After you go home your community midwife will continue to support you with visits and phone calls.

**Choosing to have your baby in the MLU**

You may choose to have your baby in the MLU under midwifery care if your pregnancy is considered to be low risk. This means:

- You have no medical conditions which need obstetric (medical) care during your pregnancy
  - and / or
- any previous pregnancies and births were uncomplicated

If you are considered to be low risk, your midwife will talk to you about having your baby under midwifery care in the MLU.

**Contacting the Spires MLU**

Our telephone number is:  
**(01865) 221666** (24 hours a day)
Coming into the Spires MLU

Ring us when you think your labour is starting so we can talk to you about what is happening and give you advice.

**Important:**
You should also contact us if you think your waters have broken, if your baby is not moving as often as normal, you develop a headache which is not resolved with paracetamol or you are losing fresh blood.

**Further Information**
You should be given a copy of the John Radcliffe Hospital and Horton Hospital Maternity Services Booklet at your booking appointment. It contains lots of information about pregnancy, labour and childbirth.
If you aren’t given a copy, please ask.

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call 01865 221473 or email PALSJR@orh.nhs.uk

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