

Tour of the centre

If you are considering having your baby with us, you are welcome to come and have a look around the unit.

We offer 3 tours a week. They happen on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays and can be booked by calling the Spires from 35 weeks of pregnancy onwards.

During the tour we also remind people that it is important have a car seat available in preparation for taking your newborn baby home. You do not need to bring the car seat in with you when you attend in labour. Please leave the car seat in your car until you and the baby are ready to go home and are being discharged from hospital.

www.ouh.nhs.uk/maternity

Please ask your midwife for more information or call: **01865 221 666**

Going home after having your baby

We expect that you will be ready to go home within 24 hours after the birth of your baby.

If you are travelling by car your baby must travel in an appropriate car seat – this is a legal requirement. Please make sure you bring your baby's car seat up to the Spires prior to discharge home. After you go home, your community midwife will continue to support you with visits and phone calls.

Contact details

The Spires Birthing Centre

Women's Centre, John Radcliffe Hospital,
Oxford OX3 9DU

Telephone: **01865 221 666**

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

We would like to thank the Oxfordshire Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership for their contribution in the development of this leaflet.

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Spires Birthing Centre

Information leaflet



'a wonderful and powerful experience'

About the Spires

The Spires is a Midwifery Led Unit (MLU) on Level 7 of the Women's Centre at the John Radcliffe Hospital. It is staffed by midwives and support staff who offer care during labour and immediately after birth for healthy women and birthing people with uncomplicated pregnancies.

Our aim is to provide a safe, relaxed and informal environment for you. We offer women and birthing people who come to the Spires to have their baby a personal and family-centred service. There is a strong emphasis on skilled, sensitive and respectful midwifery care.

The Spires provides a comfortable, home-from-home environment. There are five birthing rooms in total – three of these rooms have birthing pools. The rooms are designed to help you relax because relaxation encourages the release of natural pain-relieving hormones.

Additional support such as aromatherapy, massage, heat pads, gas and air and Diamorphine are available (Diamorphine is a strong effective painkiller). We also offer sterile water injections to help relieve back pain.

Your midwife will be happy to answer any questions you have about the pain relief options available to you.



©Photograph by Matt Livey

Who can have a baby in the Spires?

The Spires is an ideal setting if you are having a straightforward pregnancy and are likely to give birth normally.

This means you can give birth on the Spires if:

- you are between 37 and 42 weeks pregnant when labour starts
- you are having a single baby
- this is your first baby or your previous babies have been born vaginally
- you or your baby have no medical conditions which may affect the birth.

'The unit is so calm and the staff so supportive, I had the perfect birth that I wanted'

If you are unsure whether you meet the criteria please speak to your midwife.

It does not matter where you live – we care for women who live in Oxfordshire and also the surrounding counties.

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

Transfer to Delivery Suite from the Spires MLU

If there are concerns about the wellbeing of 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 the Delivery Suite. There is a lift on Level 7 that is used for transfers if necessary.

Transfers from an MLU are more common for women having their first baby (36 to 45 people in 100) than for people who have given birth before (9 to 13 people in 100).

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 arrange a transfer to delivery suite.

We have efficient transfer processes in place ready to manage this situation, but it is important to release that a delay due to a transfer may affect outcome.

If you would like more information, please ask your midwife about the guidance for birthing on an MLU. They will be happy to discuss any details with you.

Breastfeeding support

Our staff in the unit have Unicef Baby Friendly Accreditation. This means we are committed to helping new mothers and parents breastfeed their babies. We will also provide support to mothers and parents who choose to feed their babies with infant formula milk.