

Prenatal and postnatal information

Patient information

Welcome to the outpatient antenatal clinic, where your pregnancy will be monitored.

Our team of physicians, midwives, nurses and social workers will do their best to support you and your partner during the antenatal course, the delivery and the first six weeks after the delivery.

This brochure contains practical information to help you prepare for the birth of your baby. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

We wish you, your partner and the whole family, a successful and joyful pregnancy.

ANTENATAL CARE

For the follow-up during your pregnancy, you can have appointments with the same physician/supervisor each time (higher fee) or a gynaecologist under the supervision of a member of the medical staff, who will keep your records, or with one of the midwives. We try, to the best of our possibilities, to respect your choices for the entire duration of the pregnancy.

In a normal pregnancy without any additional risk factors, you will alternate visits to the hospital and to your own GP or midwife. This allows us to provide optimal follow-up and support together.

In a pregnancy with factors that increase the risk of pregnancy complications: Your doctor will schedule the necessary antenatal check-ups.

The first time you come to the clinic, the physician will collect information about you, your partner and the family. The aim of this interview is to assess possible risk factors for the pregnancy and the delivery. The physician uses the most advanced means to ensure a safe outcome of your pregnancy.

In any case, it's important that, from the beginning of your pregnancy, you change some of your habits to prevent infections.

Hygiene

- ✓ Wash your hands often.
- ✓ Avoid contact with bodily fluids (e.g., urine, saliva).
- ✓ If you are not immune to toxoplasmosis, have someone else clean the cat litter box or wear gloves. Wear gloves when gardening.
- ✓ Change towels and dishcloths daily.

Nutrition during pregnancy

- ✓ Maintain a healthy, fresh and varied diet with sufficient energy, protein, fiber, vitamins, minerals and fluids. Alcohol and nicotine negatively affect pregnancy and the baby's development



Food safety

- ✓ Keep raw and cooked food separated.
- ✓ Use fresh products; check expiry dates.
- ✓ Cook food thoroughly.

Fruit, vegetables and milk products

- ✓ Wash and peel fruit or vegetables thoroughly.
- ✓ Avoid raw milk and products made from raw milk such as soft cheeses. Choose pasteurised products.

Eggs, meat and fish

- ✓ Fully cook all meat, fish and eggs.

If you have questions, please ask them during these visits to the clinic.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

During the pregnancy

From 20 to 24 weeks onwards, you can take part in the classes, designed for pregnant women and women during labour, under the expert guidance of a physiotherapist.

Ask your GP, gynaecologist or midwife for a prescription.

After the delivery

After the delivery, you can take part in postnatal classes, designed for post-childbirth women. They're recommended at four weeks after a normal delivery, and six weeks after a Caesarean.

Ask your GP, gynaecologist or midwife for a prescription.

ONLINE PRENATAL CLASSES (IN ENGLISH)

Prenatal information about breastfeeding

- E.g. Why breastfeeding? How does milk production work?
How often should you breastfeed your baby?
How to prevent sore nipples?



View the lectures
on the UZ Leuven
website.

Prenatal information on labour and delivery

- E.g. When should I come to the hospital? What are the accommodations?
- You'll get information about labour, pain relief and childbirth, your stay at the maternity ward and some points of special interest during labour and delivery.

Practical information

- Two sessions are organised every month and take about two hours.
- Both classes are offered via ZOOM and are fully reimbursed by your health insurance.
- Registration in advance is mandatory. Make an appointment via mynexuzhealth (app or website), call +32 16 34 47 50 or with your healthcare provider during the consultation.
- Shortly before the session a link will be sent to you.



LECTURES ON PREGNANCY, DELIVERY AND MATERNITY (IN DUTCH)

- Physiotherapy during pregnancy and maternity leave
- Newborns and problems
- Psychological implications of pregnancy and delivery

INTERACTIVE DIGITAL TOUR OF THE LABOUR AND DELIVERY ROOM AND THE MATERNITY WARD

Join the virtual tour from the car park to the delivery room and maternity ward on the UZ Leuven website:
www.uzleuven.be/bevallingskwartier or scan the QR code.



LABOUR AND DELIVERY ROOM

WHEN TO COME TO THE HOSPITAL? (ALARM SIGNALS)

What to do if...

... you lose some blood?

Losing a little blood after a cervical check or sexual intercourse is possible. However, this must stop within a few hours.

Sometime during the last weeks or days you could notice a discharge of mucus with some blood. This could mean that the cervix is weakening.

All other bloody discharge should be checked at the hospital!

... labour begins?

When contractions occur, you could feel a nagging pain in your lower abdomen or in the lower back-area. At the same time your stomach will get hard. As long as you feel up to it, you can stay at home, but know that you're always welcome in the hospital.

Even if you only felt one contraction.

Look for a comfortable position. Try to change positions regularly. Walk around. Taking a bath or shower (sitting down) is very relaxing and helps to ease the pain. A shoulder or back massage does wonders. Make sure your house is warm and cosy. Dim the lights, put on some soothing music. As your home is a familiar place, it'll be easier to relax and labour will progress better. Come to the hospital as soon as you don't feel at ease anymore.

... your water breaks or you lose vaginal fluid?

Normal amniotic fluid is clear and odourless. When you detect any loss of fluid, call your partner, prepare your bags and come to the hospital. If the colour turns to green, you have to come to the hospital immediately.

If in doubt, come in for a check-up!

... foetal movements decrease?

You have to feel foetal movements at least 10 times a day. If you think the baby is moving less, eat or drink something with sugar (glucose) and have a lie-down on your left side. Your baby will probably start moving within 20 minutes and you'll feel reassured.

If in doubt, come in for a check-up!

Telephone number delivery room (available day and night): +32 16 34 36 04

COMING TO THE HOSPITAL

During the day all obstetrical emergencies up to 20 weeks of pregnancy are handled at the Emergency Department. From 20 weeks you can go directly to the labour and delivery room using the main entrance.

SCHEDULED OR NON-URGENT ADMISSION

Are you coming on the planned admission date? Or are you coming for a non-urgent admission?

Leave your car in the parking lot (Parking West). There are parking spaces reserved for pregnant women (pink spaces on level +1). From there, follow the arrows to the hospital.

Route to the delivery room

- ✓ Park on Parking West.
- ✓ Follow the Red street (Rode straat), gate 4 (poort 4).
- ✓ Go to 'Stijgpunt 2' on the right opposite the entrance lift, go to the 3rd floor.
- ✓ Follow the sign 'Bevallingskwartier'.

URGENT ADMISSION

For any emergency (day or night), drive directly to the Emergency Department.

On the Gasthuisberg campus, follow the signs to 'SPOED'. The receptionist will accompany you to the delivery room.

Central registration is not needed when you're admitted to the delivery room. The midwife of the labour room will take care of it.

YOUR SUITCASE

Delivery room (small suitcase)

For the mom:

- ✓ Long and comfortable T-shirt or short nightgown and socks
- ✓ Toiletries
- ✓ Energy snacks (nuts, fried fruit, sugar bar, yoghurt, etc.)
- ✓ Personal items, charger, music, book or magazine, etc.

For the baby:

- ✓ First clothes (size 50-56, for example body, cap, socks ...)
- ✓ Blanket

For the partner:

- ✓ Nightclothes
- ✓ Toiletries

Others:

- ✓ Identity card, health insurance booklet, (possible) marriage certificate
- ✓ Certificates, other documents that need to be signed.



Hospital stay (big suitcase)

For the mom:

- ✓ Dressing-gown and slippers
- ✓ Nightgowns
- ✓ Towels and wash-cloths
- ✓ Toiletries: comb or hairbrush, soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, etc.
- ✓ Underwear: cotton pants and (breastfeeding) bras
- ✓ Sanitary towels and clothes for when you leave the hospital
- ✓ Sanitary napkins and breast pads are provided by the hospital

For the baby:

- ✓ Clothes (size 50-56, for example bodysuit, socks, mittens etc.): approximately 2 outfits per day
- ✓ A cap
- ✓ Toiletries: baby soap and bath oil
- ✓ When you leave the hospital: portable crib, pram, blanket or shawl to wrap the baby in

Others:

- ✓ Contact details of your midwife and your GP or paediatrician (to contact yourself). Find a midwife at www.vroedvrouwen.be.

ADVICE FOR THE BIG DAY

- Welcome the pain. Every contraction brings you closer to your baby.
- Stay positive and try to put everything in perspective. A good mind helps a lot.
- Stay focused during the contractions and relax in between.
- Make sure the room is warm and welcoming. Wear socks if your feet are cold. Make yourself comfortable. Listen to your body and let us know what you need.

Skin to skin contact after birth

Meeting your baby for the first time. Just after the birth, your baby is very alert and sensitive to all kinds of sensory stimuli. Touch your baby, talk to your baby, pay special attention the first time you breastfeed. Remember this intense and magical moment.

The benefits of skin to skin contact:

- Beneficial for the baby's heart and breathing
- Your baby stays warm
- Faster parent-child bonding
- Less crying and stress
- Better start to breastfeeding
- Boosts the immune system

Skin to skin contact remains important, especially in the first days and weeks after birth.



Advice for partners

- Plan quality time with your partner. The last few weeks together are very special. In a few weeks, you'll have less time for romance and relaxation.
- Be positive! Encouragement and supportive actions are much better than (self) pity. Never play a role. It's normal to feel uncertain from time to time. Becoming a father or a mother is a major event. Don't be too brave. Spend some time talking about your feelings with your partner.
- Feel good about yourself. Don't feel useless or unnecessary. You're the most calming factor. Just being there is reassuring. Listen to your body. Sleep, eat and drink when you need to.
- Be a team with your partner. Support her choices and encourage her when things get tough. Show her you're proud of her.
- Listen to your partner's needs. Adjust your support to her requests. Her reactions can be very unpredictable. Be patient.
- Be involved during labour and birth. Take every opportunity to be actively supportive. There's so much you can do: massage her back or legs, say a few kind words in her ear, refresh her face, cut the umbilical cord, etc.
- Take the time to enjoy these unique moments intensely and together. Take photos, exchange ideas, etc.
- Prepare a warm welcome at home. Fill the fridge, tidy the house and make it warm and welcoming. Organise help if you need it.

POSTNATAL CLINIC

Maternity ward

The first few days after giving birth, you'll stay in the maternity ward of our hospital.

Being pregnant and giving birth are completely natural. Most pregnancies and births are normal and uncomplicated.

If your pregnancy is developing normally and there are no problems during the birth and post-partum period, nothing is stopping you from going home and recovering in your own environment. The medical and obstetrical care required at home will be provided by the front-line health professionals, your GP, your midwife and Kind & Gezin.

If all these conditions are met, you can leave the hospital two nights after a vaginal birth (three nights if it's your first baby) and four nights after a caesarean. If you're planning an early discharge, you need the approval of your physician/midwife and paediatrician. Contact an independent midwife for an ante-natal consultation.

It's also important to have enough help in your household so that you can find enough time to rest. Don't hesitate to call on the various home help and care services, your family and friends.

Make sure you make the most of these moments. Although tiring and intense, the first days of your child's life are wonderful and very precious for parents.

- ✓ Even if you've spent a period of time in hospital after giving birth, you're entitled to a midwife at home. Health insurance in Belgium covers up to 6 visits by an independent midwife after the birth. You can find an independent midwife near you at www.vroedvrouwen.be.
- ✓ When your baby is seven days old, you should make an appointment with your GP or paediatrician. This appointment is for a full medical check-up.

YOUR ROOM

When you're admitted, you can choose between a shared room (double) or a private room. Your preference will be taken into account as much as possible.

A private room is more expensive than a shared room. Check in advance what expenses are covered by your hospital insurance.

Your partner may only stay overnight if you have a private room. In double rooms, partners are welcome during the day. Partners are expected to leave the hospital before 9 p.m. This ensures mothers and babies get enough rest.

On rare occasions, you may have to stay in a double room, despite your wishes. The midwives will take note of your request. If a private room becomes available, you'll be transferred. Please note the following exceptions:

- If you've already been admitted for three days in a double room, you'll no longer be moved.
- Mothers who specified medical reasons, who gave birth to twins and who requested a private room will be given priority.

All rooms are equipped with a bathroom (toilet, washbasin and shower), telephone, television and fridge. Although wardrobes are fitted with locks, we advise you to leave valuables and large sums of money at home.

Visiting hours

- **Two extra visitors** a day are welcome in addition to the partner. Your partner is always welcome during the day. Your children are not included in this additional visit.
- Visits must be limited to a **maximum of one hour between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.**
- Visiting hours are the same for private and shared rooms.
- Your partner may spend the night at the hospital. This is only possible in a single room (private rate). If your partner spends the night in hospital, only breakfast will be provided in the room. The partner can get something to eat or drink from the hospital restaurant or takeaway.
- Single mothers may choose one person to be their partner, to whom the same rules apply.

GOOD TO KNOW

It's good to know that...

... **fatigue** is a bad friend during pregnancy, labour and early parenthood. We recommend that you organise home help during the last few weeks of your pregnancy and the first few weeks after giving birth.

- Take naps as often as you can: during the day when you've missed out on sleep at night or whenever your baby is asleep.
- Make sure visitors call before paying you a visit to the maternity ward.
- Make sure you have enough time to rest and enjoy motherhood with your baby.

... a baby needs **skin to skin contact**. Just by feeding and holding your baby, you increase your baby's self-confidence and emotional balance. Babies who are often held cry up to 45% less.

... **breastfeeding** is the best choice for you and your baby. It's worth reading up on this, before you find yourself with a hungry little bundle in your arms.

... **parents are crucial in caring for their baby**. That's why, in our maternity units, we involve parents in the baby care. Feeding, bathing baby, changing nappies, etc. It's a learning process, one day at a time.



... coming home after giving birth can be rather **chaotic**. It's normal for your house to be a mess in the first week. Don't feel bad about it. Take all the time you need to settle in and get organised. You, your partner and your baby come first!

You may want extra help with the housework when you come home from hospital. If you're interested in home care, you should make arrangements with a care agency in good time (at around 25 weeks of pregnancy). Make sure you find out in time so you can make the right decisions.

REGISTRATION OF BIRTH

When to register?

The birth must be registered within 15 calendar days of the birth. In all cases, registration must be made as soon as possible. If the 15th day is a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday, the deadline runs until the next working day.

Registering before the deadline is very important, as completing this formality is a prerequisite for entitlement to child benefit. Failure to register on time will result in costly and time-consuming legal proceedings.

Who can register?

The mother, the co-mother or the father can register the birth. Either the father or the mother, or both parents together, must go to the registration office.

If the child's parents are not married, the father or co-mother can only make the declaration if he or she recognised the child before the birth. In this case, the mother herself must be present.

What information needs to be provided?

A medical birth certificate (given to you after the birth), the child's names, identity cards (passports) of the mother and partner (witnesses are no longer required) and possibly a marriage certificate.

You can register the birth at the registry office or online.

Online

For more information, visit the website of the city: www.leuven.be/geboorte.

At the registry office

- Registry office Leuven (Burgerlijke stand)
Professor Van Overstraetenplein 1, 3000 Leuven (next to the station)
Tel: +32 16 27 21 36
Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.,
Thursday from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m., closed on Saturdays and Sundays.
- You need to make an appointment to register your baby.

The civil registry will provide you with an official certificate. Submit this to your health insurance fund and the child benefit fund that has paid or will pay the initial allowance.

More information

For more information about the registration, please contact the social worker.