

If you choose to use water during your labour

- Discuss your options carefully with your midwife or doctor
- Make sure your support people are aware of your plans
- Plan to get into the pool when labour is progressing normally and your cervix is at least 4cms dilated.
- Make sure that you do not get too hot, the water temperature will be checked regularly and you should get out of the pool if you feel hot or you have a temperature.
- Drink clear fluids and have cool towels to keep you comfortable.
- You can get out of the pool at any time if you feel uncomfortable. If all is well you can choose to stay in the pool for the birth or get out of the pool for the birth.
- Be prepared to get out of the pool when asked.

More Information

It is important that you are well informed about your choices in labour, talk to your midwife or doctor and check out the resources below to help guide your decision.

- The Waterbirth Book by Janet Balaskas
<http://www.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/EN/Pages/home.aspx>
- <http://www.h2ohbaby.co.nz>
- <http://www.rcog.org.uk/womens-health/clinical-guidance/immersion-water-during-labour-and-birth>
- WDHB Water for Labour and Birth Guideline

Water for Labour and Waterbirth



Birthing pools

Both North Shore Hospital and Waitakere Hospital provide the option of using deep water pools for pain relief in labour and waterbirth.

This leaflet explains the advantages and disadvantages of choosing to use water for labour and birth.

Benefits of using water for pain relief

Many women report feeling more relaxed in warm water and enjoy the feeling of weightlessness.

Being in deep water allows women to move more freely and find more comfortable positions in labour

Some women who use water for pain relief find this very helpful and they do not need to use other forms of pain relief.

As babies are already in a fluid environment in the womb it is thought that this is a very gentle way to be born

Risks of using water for labour and birth

It is possible for you to become too hot and this can divert blood flow away from your placenta and baby

You may be more likely to become dehydrated, which may slow your labour

There have been some isolated cases where inappropriate birth in water has been linked with potential harm to the baby. Having an lead maternity carer who is experienced with waterbirth practice is an important safety point.



Labour in water is not recommended

- If there are any concerns regarding your baby's health or wellbeing
- If you have had any significant bleeding in pregnancy or labour
- If you are less than 37 week pregnant
- If you are unwell with a temperature or diarrhoea
- If you have epilepsy or high blood pressure
- If you have diabetes requiring an insulin infusion in labour
- If your baby is unusually large or small
- If your baby is not lying in the normal head-down position
- If your baby's heart beat needs to be monitored continuously, and there are no facilities to do this in the water.

There may be other situations when labour and/or birth in water is not recommended. Please discuss your individual situation with your Lead Maternity Carer.