



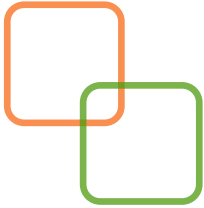
A Hospital, a Place

Although a hospital is most often a place where sick or injured people go, the maternity unit is a place where all sorts of women will give birth. When there are health issues with mother or baby, the hospital becomes a place where birth can occur under the watchful eye of health professionals. In reality, most non-pregnant people with health issues aren't admitted to the hospital unless the problem is very, very serious and immediate. For some reason, modern societies have not chosen a similar pathway for birth.

The present belief is that it's safer to birth in a hospital just in case, even if no critical problems are apparent. The result of this belief is that the majority of families will birth in a hospital, and, in that place, there will be health assessments, monitoring, and sometimes procedures done throughout the experience. Can you begin to see where your Birthing Better Pink Kit birth and coaching skills can come in handy? They give you something to do while you are in that place, unlike sick or injured people who really just hang out, bored in bed.

It's always a great idea to take a tour of your hospital prior to the birth. Most maternity units are really trying to make the place more inviting and less medical. Many birth professionals want to see women birth "naturally" unless there is something wrong. They see AMPs as the vehicle for determining the wellness of both mother and baby, yet they want families to have a good experience. This is done by having birth take place in the same room as the labor, letting babies room in, giving parents immediate access to the baby after birth and an early discharge, and encouraging fathers to be the support person. Often, you can bring in personal things that make you more comfortable, and in many hospitals you can walk through the halls during labor.

No, a hospital is not the same as your home, but for many women a home birth is neither desired nor an option, so hospitals usually do try to make the environment comforting. In fact, if you do any research into hospital births prior to the 1970s, you'll see how many positive changes have taken place in the last few decades.



So if a hospital is the place where you will give birth, consider seeing it as a home away from home or a very sophisticated, well-equipped motel. Even if you have health issues, the only thing that will happen is increased AMPs. Many of those are just the standards of care that go along with hospital care. If you have a choice, pick the hospital that gives you the most of what you would like.

Still, hospitals are hospitals, and even with the best of care practices, everyone knows that hospitals are where people usually go when they are unwell. Sick or injured people just lie around, waiting for the doctor, being monitored, or waiting for tests. This fact tends to encourage the belief that, in the hospital, there is nothing you can do for yourself. This is just not accurate for childbirth. When you take your tour, just ask whether you can use breathing and relaxation skills. You'll be told "Yes." In fact, birth professionals would love every family to be proactive about how they behave, but it's not their role to tell you to do this. They leave those decisions to you.

Don't mistake the hospital for some place that requires you to sit passively. That is not what hospital maternity staff wants. They want you to have a good birth in their place of care. A birth in a hospital can be as full of birth skills as it could anywhere else. The majority of Birthing Better Pink Kit families have given birth in the hospital and had wonderful births. They focused on what they could do for themselves while residing in a hospital for a short period of time. This includes the many, many families where health issues were part of the pregnancy and/or birth. Not once was a family stopped from using their skills while in any hospital in any country.

Your Obstetrician

Obstetricians move people in emotionally interesting ways. Many women gush over how they "love" their obstetrician because they believe he or she safeguarded the birth of their baby. Others have a hissy-fit attitude toward obstetricians and consider them to be a knife-wielding maniac.

In reality, obstetricians are neither of those things. They are highly skilled professionals, akin to auto mechanics who know how to rebuild your engine or