

Navigating MyCare for pregnancy and birth

Congratulations on your pregnancy! While no two patients or their pregnancies are the same, this will help provide you with some information on the care you and your family will receive.

1. Care during pregnancy

Finding a care provider

The first step is to have your pregnancy confirmed by your family doctor through a blood test and/or ultrasound. After you receive the results, your family doctor can send a referral to one of Sunnybrook's [obstetrics team](#). You can also self-refer for obstetrical care. Sunnybrook's [Division of Family and Community Medicine](#) and [Seventh Generation Midwives](#) also deliver babies at the hospital.

Your first appointment

Your care provider will confirm your first prenatal appointment, usually around 10 to 12 weeks of pregnancy. At this visit, please bring a list of supplements and medications you are taking. You will also be asked about your family history and your partner's medical history – for example, is there a history of gestational diabetes, high blood pressure or any genetic diseases on either side of the family.

If you are a low-risk pregnancy, you will see your care provider every month. If you are considered to be having a high-risk pregnancy, you may be referred to the High Risk Obstetrics Unit and you will be cared for by a Maternal Fetal Medicine specialist.

Prenatal tests and ultrasounds

Throughout your pregnancy, there are a [number of tests](#) that your care provider may recommend. These tests assess your health and your baby's health. Not all tests are required by all patients; please discuss any questions you may have about prenatal testing with your care provider.

Prenatal classes

We offer a [variety of classes](#) for parents-to-be. These classes prepare you for pregnancy, birth and the newborn period. Families usually attend prenatal classes one to two months before your expected date of delivery, and we recommend that you register early in your pregnancy to reserve your spot.

Staying healthy during pregnancy

During your pregnancy journey, you may have questions about many things, including [nutrition](#), [exercise](#), [your feelings](#), [drug and alcohol use](#). Please speak with your care provider if you need more information – we are here to support you and ensure you have as happy and healthy a pregnancy as possible.

Pregnancy tips and information during COVID-19

Have questions about how the COVID-19 pandemic will affect your pregnancy?

[View pregnancy tips, information and resources related to COVID-19](#)

2. Having your baby

When to come to the hospital

You may seek care at [Obstetrical Triage](#) in M5 if you are having pregnancy-related concerns and are unable to see your physician or midwife. When you are in labour, your care provider will give you specific information about when to come to the hospital. You will be assessed in Obstetrical Triage to see if you will be admitted or sent home with information about when to return. There may be a wait as those with the most pressing concerns are seen first. You may have questions about whether you're in labour – there are some tips [here](#), plus some checklists for [what to bring](#) to the hospital.

Your room while labouring

We have 20 private rooms in our [Birthing Unit](#) for low-risk deliveries. These rooms are bright and spacious and have room for you, your care team and your support person during labour and delivery.

If you deliver your baby by Caesarian section, your baby will be delivered in one of three operating rooms specially designed for women having Caesarian sections.

Please note: Sunnybrook's obstetricians use a model of group coverage. This means there is always a dedicated obstetrician covering the Birthing Unit at all times. Patients will usually have their own physician for scheduled elective Caesarean sections during the day.

Induction

Your health care team may recommend that your labour be induced. This happens when there's a concern about your health or your baby's health. You can learn more about the different ways babies are induced [here](#).

Pain options

You probably have a lot of questions about pain relief for childbirth. Everyone's experiences in labour are unique and what works for another woman may not be the right option for you. Our team will work with your preferred approach to working through your labour. There are [natural approaches](#) and [epidurals and spinals](#).

3. After your baby arrives

Skin-to-skin

Following your baby's birth, your baby will be placed on your chest, skin-to-skin. Research has shown this stabilizes your baby's temperature, heart rate and breathing, and it also triggers important changes in your body such as helping your breast milk to come in. Your nurse will work with you to start [breastfeeding](#).

Your stay after delivery

If you have a vaginal birth, your stay in hospital will be about 24 hours. If you have a Caesarean birth, your stay in hospital will be roughly 24 to 48 hours. Your care team will ensure you and your baby are well and safe to go home before you are discharged.

After your baby is delivered, you may be transferred from the Birthing Unit to the 25-bed Maternal and Newborn Unit which also cares for new families.

Breastfeeding

Support after you deliver your baby at Sunnybrook includes daily inpatient breastfeeding classes taught by the nurses and International Board Certified Lactation Consultants, a telephone helpline, a 7-day-a-week appointment schedule and a hospital grade pump rental service.

Taking care of yourself

Your nurse will check on your condition every four hours, for the first 24 hours, after a vaginal birth. If you've had a Caesarian section, you'll be checked every hour for your first day after delivering your baby. Your nurse will keep an eye on your vaginal discharge, your bladder and bowel activity and more. There are some good tips [here](#) for what to expect following the birth of your baby. Ask your health care team if there's anything you need to bring home, like a rental breast pump or sitz bath.

Taking care of your baby

From [breastfeeding](#), to [diapering](#), to [tummy-time](#), you may have a lot of questions. Be sure to ask your nurse if you need more information about caring for your baby. You can find additional information [here](#). Before you leave the hospital, your baby will have a test to check their hearing and also have a metabolic screening (a blood test done on all newborns to ensure your baby gets the best start in life).

Your baby's OHIP card and registering their birth

You must apply for your baby's OHIP card at the hospital where you gave birth. Go to Obstetrical Triage on M-5 to fill out and sign the application form. The triage clerk will give you a temporary OHIP slip for your baby. Your baby's permanent OHIP card will be

sent to your home in four to six weeks. Use the [Newborn Registration Service](#) to register your baby's birth, apply for a birth certificate, apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN) and register for Canada Child Benefits.

Traveling home: An approved infant car seat

Be sure to bring an [approved infant car seat](#), that faces backward, for your departure. Your baby's car seat should have a Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards sticker which indicates that the seat meets national standards and is legal to use in Canada.

4. Back at home

Returning home

Returning home with your baby can be an exciting yet tiring time.

Two important things to do:

- Ensure your baby is seen by a primary health care provider (a paediatrician, family doctor or midwife), within 24 to 72 hours of leaving the hospital for checkup
- Make an appointment with your health care provider (this is usually the person who has cared for you during your pregnancy) six weeks after delivering your baby

Breastfeeding clinic

Our breastfeeding clinic provides counselling, education and care plans to all women who deliver their babies at Sunnybrook. We only care for Sunnybrook patients, please be ready to provide your Sunnybrook hospital card number.

[View breastfeeding clinic information](#)

Your mood

You may have many feelings ranging from joy and excitement to guilt and sadness. These feelings are normal after having a baby. If you or a loved one suspect you have

postpartum depression, you aren't alone. There is [support and help](#). Let your health care provider know immediately if you're having difficulty coping at home. Few women experience severe depression and suicidal thoughts – please connect with your health care provider urgently or come to the Emergency Department if this describes.