

## A baby's first breath

Many people wonder how the baby breathes under water, or if the baby will drown. The baby does not take a breath until the newborn infant's skin contacts air or cold. The air contact starts a complex process in the baby's body that results in the baby taking a breath.

Researchers believe that the change in air pressure and temperature, possibly sensed by the baby's lips and nose, triggers the breathing reflex. The baby receives oxygen from the mother through the umbilical cord during the first few moments while the baby is under water. The baby will be stable as long as the cord is intact and the placenta is working as it was before and during the birth. The baby is not placed back under the water once the head has been in the air.

## Risk of infection

Researchers have found that the concentration of bacteria is less in water and, therefore, there may be a decreased possibility of infection. Records are kept to monitor the outcomes of waterbirths including the occurrence of infection.

## Monitoring for emergencies

During any birth, including a waterbirth, you and your baby are watched closely for any signs of complications. The tub can be drained quickly, and a bed is located next to the tub for easy transfer.

## Clothing

Most women choose to wear a sports bra, t-shirt, swimming suit top or a hospital gown, but no clothing is required.

## Can all women birth in water?

There are some instances that may prevent you from birthing in water:

- Fever or other evidence of maternal infection
- Any condition requiring continuous electronic fetal monitoring
- Excessive vaginal bleeding
- Prematurity
- Passage of thick meconium
- Epidural or intrathecal anesthesia
- Current skin or intestinal infections
- A baby that is showing signs of stress or distress
- Any obstetric emergency
- Problems with the tub or at the discretion of the admitting practitioner
- Multiple births (twins, etc.)

The decision to birth in water should always be discussed with your physician or midwife.

## Educational Visits and Tours

Three to four weeks before your due date, we offer a tour of our facility as well as an educational visit. During the visit we assist you in planning your birth experience and answer questions you or your family may have about your stay.

## Other Waterbirth Resources

Giving Birth in Water: A Gentle Birth Choice [www.waterbirth.org](http://www.waterbirth.org)

All About Water Birth and Water Babies: The Water Birth Website [www.waterbirthinfo.com](http://www.waterbirthinfo.com)



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# Women & Childbirth SERVICES

Learn more about the  
waterbirth experience.



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# Waterbirth - quiet, peaceful, intimate

## The waterbirth experience

During a waterbirth, you will be in a dimly lit, quiet peaceful birthing room, surrounded by those who love you. During your labor, you will immerse yourself in warm temperature-controlled water in a special tub. The buoyancy and comfort of the warm water will permit you to move freely, creating a sense of control during your labor and birth. When it is time for your baby to be born, he or she will experience a safe but gentle birth into an environment similar to that provided by the amniotic fluid.

The birth is gentle with few interventions. Monitoring is maintained at a minimum and performed when necessary.

## Family involvement

We encourage your family to be with you as part of the loving support you receive while you birth. Some fathers may choose to be in the tub to hold and support you, lending to the intimacy of this experience. If you bring your older children to the hospital, we ask that another adult is present to attend to their needs, so we may attend to your needs.

## For the Mom

Birth in water is not for everyone. All women are screened prior to consideration of waterbirth.

**The pregnancy must be considered normal, and both the mom and the infant must be considered to be in good health.**

The benefits of waterbirth are:

- Promotes relaxation
- Provides pain relief, decreasing the need for medical interventions
- Reduces blood pressure
- Reduces fear and stress levels
- Increases concentration
- May reduce incidence, severity of tearing and the need for episiotomies
- Increased mobility and ease of changing positions
- Increased feeling of control
- May speed up labor

## For the Baby

As he or she is birthed, the baby is allowed the freedom of movement in familiar fluid and surroundings. The baby's limbs unfold with greater ease during the first moments when leaving their mother's body and upon entering the water. The water allows the baby time to become accustomed to being born.

The environment is warm and soothing to the baby. The baby emerges into the water and is either retrieved by the mother, father or the birth attendant. The baby is then brought to the surface and snuggled on the mother's chest. They are then both wrapped in warm towels and blankets.

## Pain Medication

With a waterbirth, you may utilize natural pain control methods and/or injection to take the edge off. Epidural and intrathecal pain control methods cannot be administered in waterbirth.

Your confidence is our commitment. Call 920-623-2200

We are eager to make the birth of your baby as safe and gratifying as possible. Our focus is on you and your baby.

Birth in water (or "waterbirth") in a specially designed tub can provide relaxation for women during their labor.

Waterbirths have been gaining popularity in the United States and are also popular in European countries, as well as Russia.

During a waterbirth, as with all of our births at Columbus Community Hospital, our goal is to provide expert medical care along with the highest level of attention to your needs.

We call this our One-to-One Care,™ and we focus on making sure that the birth of your baby and your

first days together are as safe, comfortable and satisfying an experience as possible.

To schedule a tour, learn more about the waterbirth experience, or to register for one of our classes, call 920-623-2200.

*Connected*

TO YOU AND THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

