

What to Expect



Giving Birth at Emory Decatur Hospital

**EMORY
DECATUR
HOSPITAL**



Welcome to Emory Decatur Hospital

Emory Decatur Hospital welcomes more than 3,000 new babies into the world each year. Located in the Dr. Bobbie Bailey Women's Center Tower, our Labor and Delivery (L&D) Unit has 18 rooms for labor and birth, three operating and four recovery rooms for cesarean births, and an eight-bed area for obstetric triage and assessment. We have 52 rooms for postpartum family care and an additional 10 rooms for pregnant and postpartum women requiring high-risk care. Our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), located on the same floor as L&D, provides Level III care to more than 400 sick and premature infants each year.

View our virtual tour at emoryhealthcare.org/decaurhospital and select 'Maternity' on the right-hand side.

Our diverse, compassionate, expert team of professionals is here to provide you and your family with exceptional care before, during and after the birth of your new baby.

This booklet will provide you with an overview of how you can prepare for your baby's upcoming birth, what you can expect while you are here, and some of the unique services we offer to ensure you have a high-quality, personalized experience.

We look forward to taking care of you and assisting you with all your needs. Please contact us with your questions or concerns at EDH.birth.plan@emoryhealthcare.org.



Preparing for Your Baby's Birth

There are many things you can do now to start to prepare for your hospital stay and your baby's arrival.

Get to Know Us – Tours and Classes

To visit our facility prior to birth, please register to attend one of our in-person group tours.

We also offer prenatal classes on childbirth, breastfeeding/

chestfeeding, newborn care and behavior, and infant safety and CPR taught by our clinical experts.

For more details and to register for tours and classes, visit emoryhealthcare.org/classes.

Create Your Birth Plan

A birth plan can help organize your preferences and desires for the care you and your baby receive before, during and after birth. Sharing your birth plan and discussing it with your OB and/or midwife during a prenatal visit helps ensure you have a shared vision and understanding of your preferred birthing experience. Bring your birth plan with you to the hospital to share and discuss with your nursing team as well. Our website includes a great birth plan template you can use to help you get started!

Visit emoryhealthcare.org/decahurhospital and select “Maternity.”

Choose a Health Care Provider for Your Baby

One of our hospital pediatricians will examine your baby within 24 hours of birth, and care for him or her throughout their stay. These pediatricians specialize in the care of hospitalized newborns, and don't have outside clinics for follow-up care. Most newborns need a follow-up visit within two to three days of hospital discharge. Choosing a pediatrician or family medicine practitioner before your baby is born will help facilitate easy follow-up and allow us to send your baby's birth and testing information directly to that provider.

Purchase a Car Seat

When purchasing a car seat, make sure to buy one that is appropriate for newborns. It's a good idea to practice with your car seat before the baby is born. Hospital staff cannot install car seats or perform car seat checks for safety. To have your car seat fit checked by a certified professional, visit [nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/car-seats-and-booster-seats](https://www.nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/car-seats-and-booster-seats) to find a location near you.

Hospital Preregistration

You can preregister for your hospital stay via the Emory Healthcare Patient Portal (My Chart). Sign up for or access your account at emoryhealthcare.org/patient-portal.



Packing for the Hospital

Pack a bag now, so you are ready if labor comes early or unexpectedly. We provide the things needed for the medical and personal care of you and your baby. You may want to bring additional comfort items from home. Please leave valuables (jewelry, large sums of money) at home. The hospital is not responsible for personal belongings.

We Provide During Your Stay:	Things You Should Bring:
Gown, mesh panties and pads	Your regular toiletries and hair care supplies
Ice packs, creams and sprays (as needed)	Outfit and blanket for baby to wear home
Diapers, wipes, T-shirts and blanket for baby	Things You May Consider Bringing:
Bedding for you and support person	Extra pillows or comfort items
Hospital-grade breast pumps (as needed)	Hair ties/scarves, lip balm, lotion
Labor support equipment like peanut balls and squat bars	Lounge wear/pajamas, slippers or house shoes
Hospital meals for the patient	Preferred snacks or special meals for you and/or partner
Donor milk and/or formula (as needed)	Any nursing pillow or breast pump you plan to use at home

For a full listing of suggested items as well as common FAQs, visit emoryhelathcare.org/maternity.



On the Big Day

Am I in Labor?

Call your obstetrician (OB) or midwife's office — they will advise you to stay home, come to the office or head directly to the hospital and notify L&D that you are coming. If birth seems close, call 911.

Parking and Arrival

A parking deck is available under the Dr. Bobbie Bailey Women's Center Tower for a nominal fee. Multiple use "in and out" passes are available for purchase — ask attendant for details.

Once you have parked, take the elevators in the parking deck up to the first floor where security will greet you and send you to the labor and delivery floor.

Please note, if you are arriving emergently and think your baby is about to be born, pull up in front of the building and enter through the glass doors. Security can assist you with a wheelchair, if needed.

Bring your photo ID and insurance card with you. You will be admitted using the name on your photo ID. Patients are called back based on their medical condition. Someone arriving after you may be called back sooner due to a specific medical condition. Alert the admission clerk if you:

- Haven't felt the baby move
- Have an urge to push or feel like you need to have a bowel movement
- Are experiencing heavy bleeding, like a period

Visitation Guidelines

During labor and birth, you may have up to three support people of your choosing in the room with you 24 hours a day. After your baby is born, your primary support person can continue to stay with you 24 hours a day. Other visitors to the postpartum floor are welcome (with a limit of three in the room at a time) during regular hospital visitation hours between 8:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m.

Visitors must be at least 12 years of age to visit the labor rooms. Siblings of any age are welcome during regular visiting hours on the postpartum floor. All children who are visiting must be supervised by an adult other than the patient. Anyone with any signs of illness should not visit.

Your Labor Experience

Promoting Comfort in Labor

We offer a variety of options to help make you as comfortable as possible throughout labor. What you want and need may change as labor progresses, and you may opt to use multiple techniques to support coping with labor.

Aromatherapy, Music and Lighting

All our birthing suites have dimmable lights, and a TV station with relaxing, spa-like images and music. You are welcome to bring your own playlists, LED candles and favorite scents to make your room feel more like home. No real candles or other open flames are permitted.

Massage and Rhythmic Breathing

You and your labor partner can learn simple massage and breathing techniques to help with labor pain. Take deep, slow breaths — in with your nose and fill your lungs, then out through your mouth. During a contraction, pressure on the lower back may feel good.



Hydrotherapy: Using Water for Comfort and Relaxation

For many people in labor, hydrotherapy can promote relaxation and pain relief. Warm water can help relax your muscles and ease tension. All our labor rooms have a shower with a stool and handheld showerhead to direct warm water on your belly or back, if you desire during labor. Talk with your OB or midwife about whether you may be a candidate for shower use in labor.

Please note, water use in labor is different from water birth. Emory Decatur Hospital does not do water births.

Nitrous Oxide

Self-administered inhaled nitrous oxide can reduce discomfort and anxiety in labor and during procedures such as epidural placement or laceration repair. Similar to what is used during dental procedures, nitrous oxide in labor is a short-acting, but effective, way to help you cope as labor intensifies.

IV Pain Medication

Pain medication administered via your IV access is another short-acting method to relieve pain during labor.

Patient-Controlled Epidural Analgesia

An epidural procedure places medication into the area around your spine to provide pain relief and numbing for your lower body. At Emory Decatur Hospital, if you choose an epidural, you will be able to control the amount and frequency of medication doses you receive (within the limits your anesthesiologist sets). Because you are the expert in your own pain, this method helps you to manage your pain to the degree that works best for you.



Promoting Labor Progress

Having a baby takes time. Factors such as whether you go into spontaneous labor or your labor is induced, and whether it's your first baby or you've given birth before, may impact how long your labor lasts. Every labor experience is unique, however, and there are some things you can do in labor that promote progress.

Continuous Labor Support

Having a knowledgeable companion to provide emotional and physical support throughout labor has been shown to decrease your time in labor and your risk of having a cesarean birth (C-section).

Your partner may be your primary support person in labor, and he or she can learn many techniques for labor support through childbirth classes. We also welcome private doulas. Doulas are childbirth professionals who can provide pregnancy, labor and/or postpartum support.

Emory Decatur Hospital also has a labor support volunteer program, made up of primarily health professional students. These volunteers receive training in providing labor support and are available to provide extra assistance to people in labor who may need it.

Upright and Ambulatory Positioning

Let gravity and movement help your baby move down more easily during labor. Getting up and walking, standing, leaning, and squatting can all promote labor progress. We offer wireless fetal monitoring to better allow you to move around your room and the hallway.

Peanut Ball Use

Peanut balls are large, peanut-shaped exercise balls that promote optimal positioning for labor progress, especially for people who have epidurals. If you have an epidural and can't get out of bed, peanut balls are great tools to support optimal positioning of your pelvis to help baby move down. Each of our labor rooms comes equipped with a peanut ball and our nurses are trained in proper positioning and use.

After Baby is Born

Initial Skin-to-Skin Time

After birth, your baby will be dried off and placed in skin-to-skin contact with you for at least 60 minutes. This helps stabilize your baby's temperature, breathing, heart rate and begins your time for bonding. Once skin-to-skin time is completed, your baby will be weighed and measured. If there is a concern, it may be necessary to place your baby on the infant warmer to be more fully assessed.

Rooming-In

After your initial recovery from birth (about two hours), you and your baby will move to one of our postpartum rooms. Your baby will remain in the room with you throughout the stay. Examinations, the first bath, basic labs and other necessary testing for your baby will take place right in your room.

Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding

Feeding your baby your own milk supports optimal growth and development. Your milk fights bacteria and improves immunity, reducing the risk of infections, allergies and asthma for your baby. Making the decision to breastfeed/chestfeed your baby also has benefits for your health, including weight loss and reducing your risk of breast and ovarian cancers.

From the moment your baby is born, you have everything you need to feed him or her: your body has milk ready for baby, your brain is telling your body to make more milk and your baby is ready to drink the milk.

It takes time and lots of practice for you and your baby to learn how to feed. Be patient with yourself and your baby — most new parents say it takes about two to four weeks before they feel fully confident.

All our nursing staff are trained to assist you with breastfeeding/chestfeeding. We have lactation consultants on staff to help with any breastfeeding challenges that may arise.

How Long Should I Breastfeed?

Plan to exclusively breastfeed in the hospital and for the first four weeks. Give yourself and your baby time to become breastfeeding experts. After one month, you may start expressing your milk and give your baby your milk in a bottle. It is recommended that the baby drink only breast milk for the first six months of his or her life.

Feed Your Baby on Cue (On Demand)

It's normal for your baby to want to feed eight to 12 times per day. Feed your baby whenever and for as long as he or she wants. Cues that your baby wants to feed include mouth movements, rooting, hand-to-mouth movements or sucking on hand. Feeding as often as baby wants allows you to experience less engorgement and builds a good milk supply for the months to come.

What is Human Donor Milk?

To encourage and support your decision to breastfeed and maintain exclusive breastmilk feeding, Emory Decatur Hospital makes human donor milk available for those infants who may require supplementation. All breastmilk donors are prescreened for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV, and other diseases that can be passed through bodily fluids. Each donation is processed and individually tested to ensure the safety of the product. No preservatives, fortifiers or artificial ingredients are used.

What about Formula Feeding?

Infant formula has no disease-fighting or health properties. It does not provide the same benefits as breastfeeding and is associated with increased health risks for illness and disease. If you choose to formula-feed, we will provide you with education and support to safely prepare and feed formula.

Amenities

Food

Meals for the patient are hand-delivered by our dietary associates daily. Our nutrition services department offers a variety of delicious options and can accommodate dietary restrictions and preferences including Halal, Kosher, vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options.

While you are in labor, you will likely be on a limited diet. Talk to your OB or midwife about what that will look like for you. Food for your support person and other visitors is available in our hospital cafeteria, and in the Women's Tower café on the first floor. There are vending areas on each floor, as well as free coffee, water, and microwaves and refrigerators for patient use. There are also many restaurants nearby, and your support people are welcome to pick up food or order from a delivery service.

For Your Guests

A waiting area is available on the first floor for visitors. Any children in the waiting area must be accompanied by an adult. Public restrooms are available on each floor.

In Your Room

All our rooms are private and have spacious bathrooms. Each room comes equipped with a cable television, free Wi-Fi, and ethernet port. If you plan to use the ethernet, please bring your own cable. There is a sleeping area in each room for one support person. Our postpartum rooms also have a glider or rocking chair, and a bassinet for your baby.

We are happy you trust our team at Emory Decatur Hospital to care for you and your baby through your pregnancy and delivery. Awaiting the birth of a child is an exciting time, and we understand you may have questions. Our knowledgeable staff is here to help guide you along the way. If you have questions, you may email: edh.birth.plan@emoryhealthcare.org.

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