



## Preparing for Birth at Inova Alexandria Hospital Women's Center





## Welcome to Inova Alexandria Hospital Women's Center

We are delighted you have chosen Inova Alexandria Hospital Women's Center for your baby's birth. At Inova Alexandria Hospital, we have a commitment to offer you the best of both worlds. We focus on childbirth as a natural, intimate event to be experienced by you and your family, in a private room with all the comforts of home. At the same time, we offer advanced technology and specialized expertise, in case you or your baby need them.

We hope you've had an opportunity to visit our facility in person. If not, please call 703-750-8800 at least one month before your due date, to schedule a tour.

Please remember to bring this book with you to the hospital.

### Birth And Parenting Education Classes

Inova Alexandria Hospital Women's Center offers you a full spectrum of classes through Inova HealthSource that are designed to prepare you and your entire family for your joyous addition. Please call 703-750-8800 for a brochure on the many different classes available, including classes for expectant parents, preparing for childbirth, breastfeeding, infant safety and CPR, fitness classes, how to help siblings adjust and more. Learning all you can before your baby's birth is a great help to you after the baby arrives. Register by phone at 703-750-8800 or visit [inova.org/childbirthclasses](http://inova.org/childbirthclasses).

If you are not able to attend the childbirth classes offered at Inova Alexandria Hospital Women's Center, we highly recommend you register for our extended "Tour Deluxe." This informative session provides an orientation to the Family Birthing Center, the Mother/Baby Unit, the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and Pediatrics. It also includes information about routine care of your new baby, supplies you should have at home and warning signs of potential problems for mother and baby.

### What to Bring with You to the Hospital

- **Tote bag for labor, including:**
  - Slippers and a bath robe
  - Camera
  - Toothbrush and toothpaste
  - Bath soap
  - Eyeglasses or contact lenses
  - Socks
  - Hair dryer
  - Your birth options plan (see page 8)
- **Overnight bag for you and baby (please leave it in your car until after your baby is born), including:**
  - Nightgown or pajamas
  - Nursing bra
  - Cosmetics
  - One "going home" outfit for baby
  - One loose-fitting "going home" outfit for you
  - Sweatpants or pajamas for the father or adult support person who will spend the night

- **Infant car seat**

While traveling in a vehicle, the law requires that your baby ride in an approved infant car seat that meets current safety standards. It is very important to install the infant car seat before coming to the hospital. For maximum safety, read all instructions that come with the car seat, as well as those in your automobile owner's manual, to be certain that installation is correct. If you cannot afford a car seat, contact your state's Department of Motor Vehicles, which can help you obtain a car seat for your newborn.

### Where to Come When it's Time

- **During the day (5:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.)** — please use the Visitor Entrance. The Visitor Entrance is located on the right side of the hospital next to the paid parking lot. Take the elevator located to the right of the information desk to the second floor and follow the signs to Labor and Delivery.
- **At night (8 p.m. to 5:30 a.m.)** — please use the Emergency Entrance located on the left side of the hospital. As you enter the Emergency Entrance, turn right, walk down a long hallway (window on your right) and follow the signs to the elevators going to Labor and Delivery. Take the elevator to the second floor and follow the signs to Labor and Delivery.



## The Women's Center – Built Around Your Needs

More than 135 years of providing care to expectant mothers, women in labor, new mothers and newborns has taught us how to best support you at this important time in your life. Inova Alexandria Hospital Women's Center was designed by families to offer a warm, homelike environment. Rest assured that you will be able to go through labor, delivery and recovery without being moved from room-to-room. And of course, because the Women's Center is part of the hospital, you will have immediate access to the complete resources of our award-winning major medical facility — in fact, of the entire Inova Health System — if you or your newborn should require them.

### Your Arrival

You will be greeted at the Labor and Delivery nurses' station and escorted to a private birthing room. (Women having a planned cesarean birth or experiencing complications may be admitted to an examination room or preoperative holding area.)

You will be invited to do something that makes you comfortable — take a walk, relax in a rocking chair, take a shower or lounge on the sofa. If you wish, you may have up to five family members or close friends with you during labor and/or birth, including your other children. During birth, children must have a caregiver other than their parents.

There are cozy family waiting rooms in the Labor and Delivery Unit for family or close friends, if you do not wish to have them in your room (see the section titled "Visiting Hours" on page 5).

### Your Birthing Room

Each birthing room has a special birthing bed that adjusts so you can deliver in the position you find most comfortable. Each room also is equipped with its own private bath and shower, as well as a television and telephone.

### Experienced Staff

Your labor nurse is skilled in providing physical care and emotional support, as well as coaching relaxation and breathing techniques.

### Electronic Fetal Monitoring

We recommend using an electronic fetal monitor to evaluate the baby's status when you first arrive in labor and for at least 20 minutes every hour. Your physician or midwife can answer your questions about electronic fetal monitoring.

### Pain During Labor

The pain you experience during labor depends on several factors. There are different strategies you may use alone or in combination to help cope with pain and discomfort.

- Specific relaxation and breathing techniques
- Analgesics (e.g., Nubain®, Stadol® or morphine) — reduces pain perception and allows breathing and relaxation techniques to become more effective
- Epidural anesthesia — blocks most pain perception; numbs your body from the waist to toes; requires intravenous (IV) fluid.

You can learn more about each of these pain management methods through classes offered by Inova HealthSource. Call 703-750-8800 or visit [inova.org/childbirthclasses](http://inova.org/childbirthclasses) for more information.

## Cesarean Birth

Some cesarean births are preplanned because of known medical conditions. Unexpected cesarean births may become necessary during the course of labor, due to complications. A previous cesarean is not an automatic reason for a repeat cesarean. Please talk with your physician or midwife about your options.

Cesarean birth involves abdominal surgery and is performed in a traditional operating room located within the Labor and Delivery Unit. These births are usually done using epidural anesthesia, which will enable you to be awake for your baby's birth.

In most cases, the same nurse who will be with you during labor will also be with you during the cesarean. Your baby's father or another close support person is encouraged to be present, to support you during a cesarean birth. On rare occasions, general anesthesia is used. In this case, you will be asleep, and your support person will be asked to wait outside the delivery room.

A neonatologist (a physician specializing in newborn care) and neonatal nurse will be present to provide care to your infant immediately after cesarean birth. A special class will take you step-by-step through a cesarean birth — from admission and the role of the support person, to what to expect after birth — is offered by Inova HealthSource. Call 703-750-8800 or visit [inova.org/childbirthclasses](http://inova.org/childbirthclasses) for more information.

## Recovery from Birth

During the first hour after birth, you and your baby's father or support person will have the opportunity to become acquainted with your newborn in the birthing room, or in the recovery room if you had a cesarean. Grandparents, siblings or friends may join you, if you wish.

Mothers are encouraged to begin breastfeeding during this first hour after birth. During this time, newborns are in a "quiet alert" phase and often nurse very well.

During the first hour after delivery, your blood pressure, vaginal bleeding, the firmness of your uterus and your overall well-being will be monitored frequently by your nurse.

Your baby's temperature, respirations, color and overall condition also will be monitored by your nurse. During this time, your baby will receive an injection of vitamin K to help ensure normal blood clotting.

Eye ointment to prevent potential blindness will be administered (as required by state law).



## Infant Security

You, your newborn and your support person will be given matching identification bracelets with the same serial number. These will be attached before you or your baby leave Labor and Delivery and go to the Mother/Baby Unit.

Hospital staff who are authorized to work with new mothers and infants wear special photo identification badges. Never give your baby to anyone (including hospital staff) who does not match the photograph on his or her badge or does not have the special Mother/Baby photo identification badge.

The Mother/Baby Unit has a state-of-the-art infant security system. You will receive information about the system when you arrive on the unit.

## Mother/Baby Unit

Your new family member has arrived! There is nothing more special than the birth of a new baby and the family attachments that begin. Sometimes you will feel exhilarated; other times you may feel exhausted, anxious or even frightened about your new responsibilities. During your brief stay on the Mother/Baby Unit, you will have opportunities to rest, celebrate and begin learning how to care for yourself and your new baby.

## Caring for Your Newborn

You can expect your newborn to receive the following care during the remainder of your hospital stay:

- Your baby will be carefully observed in the Admissions Nursery until he or she is able to maintain adequate body temperature and be removed from underneath warming lights. Fathers and mothers are welcome to be with their new baby in the Admissions Nursery.
- Your mother/baby nurse will monitor your baby at regular intervals to ensure that he or she is adjusting well to life outside the womb.
- Your pediatrician or family practice physician will examine your baby. If you do not have a pediatrician, or your pediatrician is not on staff at Inova Alexandria Hospital Women's Center, one of our neonatologists will examine your baby.
- A neonatologist, who is an expert in providing care to both healthy and sick newborns, is in the hospital 24 hours a day in case your baby needs to see a doctor immediately. (These physicians charge separately from the hospital for their services.)
- If you desire, your obstetrician will circumcise your male baby. Please talk with your physician about this before your delivery. Your mother/baby nurse will teach you how to properly care for the circumcision.
- Blood will be taken from your baby's heel for metabolic screening tests, including PKU (as required by state law). We try to do this after your baby is 24 hours old. However, if your baby goes home before 24 hours, the tests will need to be repeated within two weeks at your pediatrician's office or clinic.
- Our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) will provide skilled care should your baby be born prematurely or ill.

## Caring for You

Rest is very important for new mothers. Please try to rest as much as possible between times when you are feeding your baby.

Your mother/baby nurse will frequently check your uterus and the amount of your bleeding. Once you are stable, you can walk to the bathroom, first with assistance and then by yourself. Your nurse will give you instructions on personal care.

Your mother/baby nurse will help you learn to care for your new baby, including feeding, diapering, caring for the umbilical cord and recognizing your baby's unique needs.

The baby's father or your adult support person is welcome to spend the night with you. We ask that this person bring pajamas or sweat pants to sleep in. Please ask your nurse for linens for the sofa bed.

You will receive a self-medication packet. Please ask your nurse about additional pain medication if needed.

Juices and snacks are available. Please ask the nursing staff. The nutrition assistant will give you a meal menu.

Lactation support and assistance is provided by your nurse. All of our nurses are skilled to assist the new mother with breastfeeding. Board-certified lactation consultants are available during the day at your request. Hours of availability are posted in the patient rooms. You will be able to call your nurse on her pocket telephone or through the nurse call light.

We know how important it is to communicate with your family and friends at this special time. We are pleased to provide free, high-speed Internet access at our hospitals for those who have wireless-enabled laptops or PDAs. This service is managed by Wayport, a professional firm that specializes in wireless Internet access. It's available throughout the hospital — no password is required. If you have questions or need technical support, call 888-304-9131.

Inova Alexandria Hospital has also partnered with CarePages<sup>SM</sup> to offer its online social-networking tools to help patients, families and friends keep in touch while loved ones are in the hospital. It's free to join. Just register, and you'll be able to create personalized Web sites where you can post photos and update friends and family about your new baby. Ask your nurse for more information about creating your own CarePage.



## Education

As mentioned before, your nurse will talk with you about baby care and self care. By taking care of yourself, your comfort level can increase as you become more experienced with your baby.

All moms will be shown how to use our “Feed Me, Change Me” forms, to keep track of feedings and wet diapers.

The Newborn Channel (channel 38 in English and channel 39 in Spanish, on the TV in your room) offers free programs 24 hours a day on various aspects of newborn care and adjustment to parenting. Please refer to our New Infant booklet, which your nurse will provide, for valuable information. It is also a good reference for you once you get home.

## The Lactation Center at Inova Alexandria Hospital

The Inova Alexandria Hospital Women’s Center is staffed with board-certified lactation consultants to help breastfeeding mothers.

Electric breast pumps for rental and purchase, along with nursing bras and other supplies needed for breastfeeding, are available through the Lactation Center.

An outpatient “latch clinic” is available for new mothers with infants 21 days or younger, to help with positioning and latch issues. The clinic is held Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. at the Lactation Center, located directly across the elevator on the third floor, and costs \$25. An appointment is needed.

Call **703-504-PUMP (7867)** for more information regarding services offered by the Lactation Center.

## Celebration

Due to short hospital stays and your need for rest and recovery, we recommend that you delay visitors, telephone calls and flowers until you return home.

## Visiting Hours

Ask your family and friends not to visit if they are ill (including colds and flu) and be sure they wash their hands when they arrive.

- The baby’s father or a support person — unlimited; may spend the night.
- All other visitors — visiting hours are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; for the comfort and privacy of all of our patients, five visitors per room are allowed, including the baby’s father. Significant others and grandparents are welcome anytime. All visitors must be over the age of 12 and healthy. Children under 12 years of age are NOT allowed on the unit, unless they are a brother or sister of the newborn. Brothers or sisters under the age of 18 will NOT be allowed to stay with mom without adult supervision.

## Decisions

You will need to complete the birth certificate worksheet. We recommend that you choose your baby’s name before you come to the hospital, so the birth certificate process can be completed before you return home. (See the section titled, “Birth Certificate Information” on page 7).

In the hospital, disposable diapers are used. At home, you have the option to use cloth or disposable diapers. Because it can be difficult to tell if a disposable diaper is wet, many breastfeeding moms choose cloth diapers for the first few weeks so they can be sure their baby is having six or more wet diapers in a 24-hour time period. Babies who do not have six or more wet diapers may be dehydrated and need to be seen by a doctor.

## Preparing to Go Home

Before you and your baby go home, you can expect the following things to happen:

- Your obstetrician and pediatrician will discharge you and your baby.
- Your nurse will review information about activity limits after discharge, follow-up appointments with your physicians, and signs and symptoms for which you need to notify your physician.
- As mentioned before, the state requires that infant hearing and metabolic screening tests, and birth certificate worksheet, be completed before discharge.
- Your nurse will remove one of your baby's ID bands after verifying that it matches your ID band.
- You will sign the footprint sheet verifying this identification process has taken place.
- If you have not prepaid the portion of your hospital bill not covered by insurance, you will need to go to the cashier before discharge.
- An escort will be arranged to help you and your baby from your room to your car, with a wheelchair and a cart if necessary.
- As discussed before, your infant car seat must be properly installed.

The following circumstances may necessitate a longer stay:

- A blood test on your baby is needed to check the bilirubin level.
- Blood tests are needed to ensure that you are stable enough to go home.
- Circumcision is performed late; it will be followed by a required observation time by a nurse.
- Decisions by either your obstetrician or pediatrician for you or your baby to be observed longer by our nursing staff.

## Items to Take Home

Several items will be issued to you during your hospital stay that you may take home with you:

- Sanitary pads
- Blue waterproof pads
- Water pitcher
- Sitz bath
- Spray bottle
- Diapers under the crib
- Baby diaper wipes
- Medication remaining in your self-medication packet

Bed pillows, bedding, baby blankets and towels are hospital property and must remain at the hospital.

## Once You and Your Baby Are Home

After going home, we encourage you to call your obstetrician, midwife or pediatrician if you are concerned about yourself or your baby. It is important for you to become familiar with the potential warning signs and symptoms that should be reported to your doctors. See your physician's discharge instructions and our New Mother Care and New Infant Care booklets for more specific information. Please feel free to call our nursing staff at 703-504-3205 for information anytime. We are available 24 hours a day.

Bring your baby and meet other new mothers to discuss the common situations and challenges of parenthood. For dates and times, visit [inova.org/childbirthclasses](http://inova.org/childbirthclasses).



## Birth Certificate and Social Security Card Information

### Completion of the Birth Certificate

While you are in the hospital, the birth registrar will visit you to obtain information for the birth certificate. The certificate cannot be printed for your review and signatures without a name for your baby. Please choose your baby's name so the birth certificate process can be completed before you leave the hospital.

- If you are married, please make sure you bring the following information about your husband to the hospital for the certificate:
  - Social Security number
  - Age
  - Place of birth
  - Education
- If you are not married, you will have the opportunity to complete an Acknowledgement of Paternity form for your baby. Please ask the birth registrar about this form. To receive paternity papers, the father of the baby needs to be present with photo identification.

### Obtaining a Copy of the Birth Certificate

The birth registrar will give you an application for a copy of the birth certificate. When your baby is four weeks old, complete the application and mail it, along with a check or money order, to:

State of Virginia  
Department of Vital Records  
P.O. Box 1000  
Richmond, VA 23218

### Applying for the Social Security Card

There is an area on the birth certificate where you can apply for your baby's Social Security card. If you leave the hospital before reviewing and signing the printed certificate, you will be responsible for obtaining your baby's Social Security card, which will be more difficult than doing it at the hospital. If you do sign for a card, you should receive it automatically in approximately three to five months. If you do not receive it, contact the Social Security Administration at 800-772-1213.

## Información sobre los certificados de nacimiento y tarjetas del seguro social

### Cómo solicitar el certificado de nacimiento

Mientras se encuentra en el hospital, recibirá la visita del oficial de registros de nacimientos con el fin de obtener la información necesaria para expedir el certificado de nacimiento. No se puede imprimir el certificado para que usted lo revise y lo firme si el bebé no tiene nombre. Por favor elija el nombre de su bebé para poder completar el proceso de expedición del certificado antes de que salga del hospital.

- Si es casada, haga el favor de traer al hospital la siguiente información acerca de su esposo:
  - número de seguro social;
  - lugar de nacimiento;
  - edad;
  - último grado de educación.
- Si no es casada, tendrá la oportunidad de completar un formulario de reconocimiento de paternidad para su bebé. Haga las averiguaciones sobre este formulario con el oficial de registros. El padre del bebé necesita presentarse con una identificación con foto para tramitar los papeles de paternidad.

### Cómo obtener una copia del certificado de nacimiento

El oficial de registros le dará un formulario para solicitar copia del certificado. Cuando su bebé cumpla las cuatro semanas, complete y envíe la solicitud con un cheque o giro al:

State of Virginia  
Department of Vital Records  
P.O. Box 1000  
Richmond, VA 23218

### Cómo obtener la tarjeta del seguro social

La solicitud contiene un espacio para pedir la tarjeta del seguro social para su bebé. Si usted sale del hospital sin revisar y firmar el certificado de nacimiento impreso, usted será responsable de obtener la tarjeta del seguro social por su propia cuenta. Este proceso le será más difícil que haber tramitado la tarjeta en el hospital. Una vez que haya completado y firmado la solicitud, la tarjeta del seguro le llegará en un lapso de tres a cinco meses. Si no la recibe en dicho plazo, llame a la Social Security Administration al teléfono 800-772-1213.

# Birthing Options

To help us individualize your birth experience, please complete the following and bring it with you to the hospital.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Prenatal

1. Have you ever attended childbirth preparation classes?  Yes  No
2. Who will be your labor support person? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Did he/she attend classes with you?  Yes  No

## Your Children

4. Do you plan to have them visit right after birth?  Yes  No
5. Will they visit you and the baby during your hospital stay?  Yes  No
6. Are you considering having your child(ren) present for the birth?  Yes  No

If yes, who will be the chaperone? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Children must be accompanied by an adult other than the parent.)

*Note: We offer a sibling class to prepare children for a new baby. Call 703-750-8800 to register.*

## Your Birth

7. Do you presently plan to use one of these delivery methods? (Please check any that apply.)
- Lamaze techniques
  - Bradley techniques
  - Epidural anesthesia (IV necessary)
  - Cesarean
  - VBAC (Vaginal Birth After Cesarean: for a mother who has previously delivered by cesarean)

## Your Newborn

8. Please provide the name and phone number of your baby's doctor:
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you plan to breastfeed?  Yes  No
10. If your baby is male, do you plan to have him circumcised?  Yes  No
11. When the baby has made the transition after birth without problems, do you want him/her with you in the hospital at all times?  Yes  No

*Note: Mother, father and baby are routinely kept together for approximately one hour after birth, barring any medical problems. Parents are welcome to stay with their babies in the admission nursery.*

## Your Hospital Stay

12. Do you have any special dietary needs?  Yes  No


## Going Home

13. Have you made arrangements for help at home?  Yes  No

## Special Needs

14. Has your doctor indicated that you or your baby may have special needs related to this pregnancy?  Yes  No





Inova Health System is a not-for-profit healthcare system based in Northern Virginia that consists of hospitals and other health services, including emergency- and urgent-care centers, home care, nursing homes, mental health and blood donor services, and wellness classes. Governed by a voluntary board of community members, Inova's mission is to improve the health of the diverse community it serves through excellence in patient care, education and research. Inova provides a healthy environment for its patients, families, visitors, staff and physicians by prohibiting tobacco use on its campuses.

[www.inova.org/iah](http://www.inova.org/iah)

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