



Choice of Birthplace

The midwives at Pomegranate have privileges at BC Women's Hospital, St. Paul's Hospital and Burnaby Hospital. Each one has its uniquely positive aspects. The following is an attempt to outline these, based on our own experience and feedback from clients, in order to help you make an informed choice about which will suit your needs best.

If you don't initially have a strong preference, we suggest you do a hospital tour of each hospital you are interested in. In fact, we highly recommend doing a tour of whichever hospital you choose - even if you are planning a home birth. If nothing else, we want you to know where the front door is, just in case that we need to meet you there in a rush.

If you have any further questions, feel free to ask your midwife. We encourage you to register as soon as possible after 12 weeks, by filling out the appropriate forms at our clinic.

If you start labour on a day when your first-choice hospital is full, we will have the option to go to another hospital where we have privileges. If these are also full, we will try to go to a hospital with other midwives willing to accept our transfer of care. If this is not an option, your care will be transferred to a doctor at another hospital, but we will remain for supportive care. If you are eligible, the other option available to is to choose to have a home birth.

BC Women's Hospital

4500 Oak Street (between 28th & 32nd)

Information: 604-875-2424

www.bcwomens.ca

Births per year: 7000

To sign up for a tour:

<https://edreg.cw.bc.ca/Prenatal/Courses/HospitalOrientation.aspx>



Geographical restriction

BCWH currently only takes patient registrations from those living in Vancouver postal codes. This is due to a larger than anticipated volume of deliveries, which occasionally results in a lack of beds and/or nursing staff.

An exception to this restriction is for planned homebirth patients, since BCWH is the hospital for transport in case of emergency. Non-emergency transports are still expected to go elsewhere, so you may need to register at two hospitals.

Large number of staff

All of the hospitals have highly skilled and caring staff. During a normal labour, you are unlikely to have a need to take advantage of the staff available other than the nurses assigned to you. If your labour starts to take a turn towards difficult or complicated, we may consider consulting with other careproviders (usually anesthetists, obstetricians or pediatricians). Since BCWH is a large, tertiary care hospital, it has the largest number of consultants available. During slow periods such as nights and weekends, appropriate consultants will always be available at any hospital, but at BCWH they are always in-house (i.e. in the hospital), while at other hospitals they may be close by but outside the hospital, carrying a pager.

Holly/Cedar wing

BCWH has two birthing areas, the Labour & Delivery Suite and the freshly renovated Holly/Cedar wing. The Holly/Cedar rooms are large and comfortable, with big tubs and



most have windows. The hallways are quieter than the L&D Suite, due to fewer patients and staff.

Holly/Cedar has labour/delivery/recovery/postpartum rooms, aka single room maternity care (SRMC). This means that the room you birth in, is the room you stay in if you are staying postpartum. If you deliver in the L&D Suite, after a few hours you will be transferred to a postpartum bed. Since most of our clients go home directly from labour/delivery/recovery, this has less chance of affecting you.

Because Holly/Cedar is restricted to low-risk low-needs patients, as a midwife client you are more likely to get a room, especially if you are planning an unmedicated delivery. Unfortunately, because of the postpartum aspect of SRMC care, there are only a few labouring patients allowed at any time, vastly decreasing the chance of having an available room for anyone arriving in labour.

Private rooms

There is a myth that BCWH has some shared labour rooms. This is untrue. What is true is that a few (10%) of the postpartum rooms are shared. These are allotted on a first-come-first-served basis. Having paid directly or through extended health insurance coverage will not ensure a private room. Extended insurance will pay for "Preferred Accommodation", which includes free parking, complementary coffee, gift shop vouchers, complementary baby photos and TV and phone use.

Dedicated OR

Because BCWH only does obstetrics and gynecology, the OR does not carry the same infection risk as other general hospitals where sick or injured people may be sharing the recovery room. For this reason, babies born in the OR at BCWH are allowed to stay with their mothers during the two-three hour recovery process, as are partners. Breastfeeding and bonding is encouraged during this time. In other hospitals, babies and partners wait for mom back in the postpartum room.

Waterbirth

BCWH allows waterbirth. (St. Paul's feels that it is a risk for workplace injuries to nurses. Burnaby doesn't have tubs.) Unfortunately, a number of the labour rooms at BCWH do not have tubs, but the tubs they do have are large and comfortable.

Donor Milk Bank

If you are having serous breastfeeding problems, enough that supplementing is necessary, BCWH has an onsite donor milk bank which provides an option to formula.

Parking

Large parking lot, never full. Drop off area near Admitting.

St. Paul's Hospital

1081 Burrard (north of Davie)
604-682-2344
www.providencehealthcare.org

Births per year: 2000

To sign up for a tour: 604-806-8298





SRMC

A common reason for choosing St. Paul's is the single room maternity care. All rooms have large tubs, most have windows.

Community-based hospital

St. Paul's maternity is smaller than BCWH, which is a tertiary care centre for the whole province. Burnaby maternity is even smaller still. Research shows that low-risk women have decreased chances of intervention if they deliver in smaller care centres. It also means that there are fewer staff and patients at any given time, leading to a quieter atmosphere.

Familiar with midwifery care

Because both St. Paul's and BCWH have been privileging midwives for the better part of a decade, generally the other staff are familiar with midwifery-style care and the needs of midwifery clients. Many midwives have warm, collegial relationships with the nurses and doctors at these hospitals.

General hospital

As a general hospital that provides care other than obstetrics and gynecology, St. Paul's can offer a wider range of services. For example, surgical or neurological care, for those who have specialty needs.

Parking

Smaller parking lot, often full. Must go through Emergency entrance at night.

Burnaby Hospital

3935 Kincaid Street
(southeast of Boundary & Canada Way)
605-434-4211
www.fraserhealth.ca



Births per year: 1500

Until November 2006, there were no midwives privileged at Burnaby Hospital, so we have only had a few deliveries there and have little feedback to relay. We can vouch for the friendliness of the physicians and nurses in welcoming us on board. As a small, community-based hospital we find it to be the similarly quiet and calm like St. Paul's.

Considerations in choosing your hospital

Commonalities

- Kind, caring staff
- Highly skilled staff
- Family-friendly
- Rooming-in with baby
- 24-7 anesthesia available (may not be in-house at Burnaby)
- Student nurses and doctors (medical residents are only involved when it becomes necessary to consult a doctor in a complicated labour)
- Hospital food
- Being disturbed by noise from neighbors' babies, staff with various duties, etc.



- A normal labour and birth will mostly be experienced at home. By the time you arrive at the hospital, how your room looks will not be of utmost importance to you!

Clinically

- Are you having a straightforward pregnancy? If you are experiencing complications, a larger hospital will have more specialists to choose from.
- Are you planning a home birth? If so, you should register at BCWH, since that is the hospital we use in the case of emergency home birth transports. You can also register at another hospital, if that would be your preference in the case of a non-emergency transfer, e.g. for pain relief.
- If you are planning a cesarean section delivery, is it important to you that your partner and baby to remain with you in the recovery room?
- Does your baby have a known anomaly that could benefit from care at BC Children's?
- Is pharmacological pain relief a key part of your birth plan? If so, some hospitals do not have anesthetists on-site 24-7. If necessary to page them to come from elsewhere, there may be a wait.

Geographically

- Which hospitals are you eligible for?
- Do you live closer to any particular hospital?
- Are you close enough to the hospital that driving time in labour is minimized? Will this be affected by rush hour traffic?