



*Waterbirth at Mile Bluff*

*Using the power of water for a  
calming birth experience...*



*MileBluff*  
MEDICAL CENTER

# About waterbirth

During your labor at Mile Bluff, you can utilize a variety of labor techniques, including water immersion or hydrotherapy. When you choose to harness the power of water for labor and delivery, you will use a temperature-controlled tub designed for birth.

In a calm environment, surrounded by your support team, you will use the buoyancy and comfort of the water to help you through your labor. The water allows you to move freely, and provides you with a sense of control during your labor and birth.

When it is time for delivery, baby will experience a safe, gentle birth into an environment similar to that of your womb.

## Can all women have a waterbirth?

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

- fever or evidence of bacterial infection
- any condition requiring continuous electronic fetal monitoring
- excessive vaginal bleeding
- premature labor
- passage of thick meconium (when baby has their first bowel movement before they are born)
- use of epidural or intrathecal anesthesia
- current skin or intestinal infections
- baby showing signs of stress or distress
- any obstetric emergency
- multiple births (ex. twins)
- you are unable to comply with instructions
- complicated, high-risk pregnancy
- you have mobility issues that may make it difficult for you to get in and out of the tub

The decision to birth in water should always be discussed with your delivering provider.

## Your experience

In order to have a waterbirth delivery, your pregnancy must be considered low-risk, and you and your baby must be in good health.

Waterbirth may:

- reduce the intensity of pain during contractions
- create a feeling of weightlessness, buoyancy and relaxation
- reduce the pressure on the maternal pelvis and muscles
- provide freedom to reposition your body with free range of movement
- reduce the use of pain relief medication/ anesthesia, and the potential side effects associated with them
- relieve anxiety by increasing the production of endorphins (the body's natural pain relief hormone)
- reduce the risk of perineal lacerations/tearing
- increase your feeling of control



As long as it is safe for you and baby, we will support your choices when it comes to labor and delivery.

## Baby's experience

When delivered in water, baby has the freedom of movement; and is familiar in the surrounding of fluid. The water allows for the limbs to unfold with ease. The warmth of the water soothes baby, allowing time to become accustomed to being outside of your womb.

Baby will be brought to the surface by you, your support person, or the birthing center team. Your newborn will be brought to your chest where he/she will be assessed while snuggling and connecting with you.



## Frequently asked questions

### ***Can I use pain control during a waterbirth?***

With waterbirth, you may utilize natural pain control methods. We have different tools and techniques that can help you find the comfort you need. Certain medications, injections, and other medical interventions can be used in the tub, however, epidural and intrathecal pain control methods cannot be used during waterbirth.

### ***Is there a risk that baby will drown?***

Many people wonder how the baby breathes underwater, or if the baby will drown. In waterbirth, the baby does not take a breath until the 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.

The baby receives oxygen from mom through the umbilical cord during the first few moments 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.

### ***What is the risk of infection?***

Research has shown that the concentration of bacteria is less in water. There may be a decreased possibility of infection.

### ***Will I be connected to monitors?***

During any birth, including waterbirth, you and your baby are watched closely for any signs of complications. We also have wireless monitors available that can be worn in the water. If an emergency arises, the tub can be drained quickly and the birthing center team will guide you safely into a bed for care and delivery.



### ***What should I wear during waterbirth?***

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