Guide for Expectant Mothers

University Medical Center of Princeton
at Plainsboro
Princeton HealthCare System
Congratulations!

Becoming a parent is a very exciting time in your life, a time of new experiences, wonder and joy. Our dedicated team of physicians and nurses at the Center for Maternal & Newborn Care at University Medical Center of Princeton (UMCP) is ready to help you feel comfortable through labor and delivery, as well as confident in caring for your new baby when you go home.

Planning Your Maternity Stay

As you prepare for your special day, consider packing a small bag of personal items to bring with you – anything that will make you feel comfortable during your stay with us, such as socks, slippers, robe, underwear, a support bra or nursing bra, personal hygiene items, music and books. You will also want to include clothing for you and your baby to wear home.

When you go into labor, please contact your obstetrician (OB) or midwife for guidance on when to come to the hospital. If it is after midnight, you will enter the hospital through the Emergency Center of Care at UMCP, where our staff members are ready to assist you.

If you have a scheduled C-section or induction, please arrive promptly to ensure your procedure occurs without delay. Admission details have already been handled, so you can report directly to the maternity unit on the sixth floor, where the staff will greet you and bring you to your labor suite.

At UMCP’s Center for Maternal & Newborn Care, both mom and baby are cared for at all times by an expert team of family health specialists. We have partnered with Penn Medicine’s Division of Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) and The Children’s Hospital of
Philadelphia (CHOP) to ensure that you and your baby will have access to board certified Penn Maternal Fetal Medicine specialists and board certified CHOP neonatologists 24/7. They are able to attend any delivery, C-section, or to care for your baby in the nursery.

Our highly skilled and compassionate staff is focused on promoting a safe, unique, family-centered birth experience.

What do I pack?

**Hospital Check List:**
- Books
- Car Seat (should be installed in car prior to delivery)
- Cell Phone Charger
- Chapstick
- Clothing for infant to wear home
- Personal Hygiene Items
- Robe
- Slippers
- Snacks for Labor (ice pops, lollipops)
- Socks
- Support/Nursing Bra
- Toothbrush/Toothpaste
- Please leave all valuables at home or utilize our in-room hotel size safe

**Labor Partners and Visitors**

Guests play an important role in the experience of the new mother, both during delivery and after the baby is born. It is our goal to keep a balance of allowing family and friends to visit with our patients, while maintaining an atmosphere of privacy and serenity. With this in mind, you are welcome to have up to two people with you during labor and delivery (they will be given ID bracelets). At times, it may be necessary for the physician to request that only one person accompany you during the birth and subsequent recovery.

After delivery, you will stay in a comfortable, single-patient room where loved ones are welcome to visit. We also provide a comfortable sleep chair for one adult visitor who wishes to remain with you overnight. For the health of our mothers and their newborns, we respectfully request that people with a cold or flu refrain from visiting.

**Skin-to-Skin**

At UMCP we are strong supporters of skin-to-skin care for mother and baby.

Skin-to-skin:
- Helps your baby maintain their own body temperature
- Increases restful sleep for your baby
- Stimulates brain development
- Stabilizes heart rate and breathing patterns
- Increases a breast-feeding mother’s milk production
- Improves parent/infant bonding

Immediately after delivery, your baby will be placed on your chest or abdomen. If he/she needs any special treatment, your baby will be placed on the warmer bed right next to yours. As soon as mom and baby are ready, the baby is placed on mom’s chest for skin-to-skin contact. When your baby is ready, he/she may search out the breast and begin breastfeeding. Our goal at UMCP is to have all infants participate in skin-to-skin care for at least one hour after birth, and all breastfeeding infants feeding within the first hour of life.
You may even be able to do skin-to-skin care in the operating room after a C-section if you desire. Immediately after birth your baby will be taken to a warmer bed in the operating room for initial stabilization. If you and your infant are stable, the baby will be brought back to you and placed on your chest, while your obstetrician finishes your surgery. The baby’s nurse will stay with you to be sure that you and baby are comfortable with the experience. When your surgery is complete, you and your infant will be transported to the recovery room.

Skin-to-skin contact is beneficial anytime. Newborn infants often have trouble maintaining their temperature. By holding your infant skin-to-skin, you can provide the warmth your infant needs. Holding your baby skin-to-skin will also help to increase your breast milk production, decrease fussiness/colic and improve infant’s sleep.

**Breastfeeding Support**
The choice of how you feed your baby is yours, and you will be supported every step of the way. Choosing to breastfeed can be an extremely rewarding experience for you, and the health benefits are significant for both you and your baby. It is important to remember that while breastfeeding is natural, it’s a learning experience and takes practice and patience. If you’re planning to breastfeed, our staff of well-trained nurses, lactation counselors and lactation consultants offer lactation support 24 hours a day. To support the recommended practice of feeding your baby whenever he/she is hungry, rather than on a fixed schedule (“breastfeeding on demand”), we encourage you to keep your newborn in your room as much as possible during your stay.

**The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative**
UMCP is in the process of applying for Baby Friendly Designation. Baby Friendly is a global program to encourage and recognize hospitals and birthing centers that offer an optimal level of care for breastfeeding. The core components of the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative are the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding.

**10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding**

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is communicated to all staff.
2. Train staff to implement this policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth.
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed and maintain lactation when separated from their infant.
6. Give infants no food or drink other than breast milk unless medically necessary.
7. Practice rooming-in: allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
9. Avoid giving pacifiers to breastfeeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups.
The Importance of 24-Hour Rooming In

We believe that the parents are the primary caretakers of normal, healthy newborns and the medical personnel are here to assist you and teach you the skills you will need to take your baby home. Rooming-in allows parents and their baby to get to know each other and to get in harmony with each other. This also provides parents with the opportunity to learn your baby’s feeding cues. Babies awaken and begin these cues in several ways. Often they will look around, lick their lips and put their fingers or fist to their mouth. You may also observe the “rooting reflex” in your baby, which is a wide opening of the mouth and turning the head back and forth as if looking for a nipple. When your baby cries, he or she is giving you a very late feeding cue, usually after there has been no response to other cues. For a successful feeding, it is best not to miss this window of opportunity.

It is important for parents to understand their infant’s sleep patterns before going home and it is also important to learn the calming techniques that will help to settle your baby back to sleep. Rooming-in parents are well on their way to achieving two important goals of parenting: to know their baby well and to help their baby feel content.

Harmony between infants and their parents is very individual. Schedules are rigid, and harmony is flexible. Harmony means parent and baby arrive at a “schedule” that is mutually agreeable and not determined by the hospital staff members. Parents get a feeling of rightness when they are in sync with their baby.

Your baby has spent nine months in your womb listening to your heartbeat, breathing and voice. After birth, these are the same things that provide a sense of security and comfort to your baby. It is unrealistic to expect that a newborn baby will be more content in a crib separated from their mother. Babies miss the womb, and skin-to-skin contact with mom is very reassuring.

For breastfeeding mothers and babies, there is also a release of milk producing hormones when the baby gives feeding cues. With 24-hour rooming-in, it has been found that mother’s milk is produced in greater volume 24 to 48 hours sooner than in mothers who are separated from their infants. Breastfed infants should only have one five-hour interval of sleep in a 24-hour day and this does not usually occur at night during the first several weeks. It has also been documented in research that there are fewer incidents of breastfeeding problems such as sore nipples and engorgement for women who take advantage of 24-hour rooming-in. Milk-producing hormones are also higher during the evening and night hours and these feedings are important in the long-term success of breastfeeding.

Parents are the most concerned and observant caregivers in the world and with the time spent learning from the nursing staff with the baby in your room, you will go home confident and secure in the knowledge that you know your baby well and are comfortable with caring for him or her.

Please ask for help anytime you need it. The call button on your remote will alert your RN that you need assistance.
**Going Home**
While individual circumstances may vary, you typically will be discharged after two nights if you had a vaginal birth and after three to four nights if you had a C-section. Early discharges can be discussed with your physician or midwife.

Before you are discharged you will be asked to attend a discharge and newborn care class. Unless medically necessary to stay with your newborn, all discharges home will occur at 11 a.m. on your day of discharge. We ask that you complete your child’s birth certificate worksheet as soon as possible, preferably by the night before discharge. We are committed to making sure your transition home is smooth and that you have the skills you need to feel confident when you bring your baby home. We offer a daily Baby Bath Class from Monday through Friday. If you would like to attend a class, please make arrangements to do so prior to the morning of your discharge.

Before your discharge, please have a car seat for your baby properly installed in your vehicle. To ensure the safety of your newborn, Princeton HealthCare System’s Community Education & Outreach Program provides free car seat safety checks by appointment (1.888.897.8979); we encourage you to take advantage of this complimentary service. Our maternity staff is not certified to inspect car seats. We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

**NICU**
Board certified neonatologists from The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) are on-site 24/7 to provide a higher level of care if your baby needs it. If your newborn will be staying in the Neonatal Intermediate Care Unit after your discharge, we provide a comfortable lounge for you to rest during your visits until your baby can be transferred to one of the private NICU rooms, where you can remain with your infant as much as you would like.

For more information about labor and delivery at University Medical Center of Princeton, call 609.853.7670 or visit www.princetonhcs.org.

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**Childbirth Education & Family Programs**
Princeton HealthCare System’s **Community Education & Outreach Program** provides a complete range of childbirth and family programs to ensure that new parents and every member of the family have important information and support so they can share in the joy of one of life’s most precious moments. Our programs help families feel fully prepared to care for their new babies in the first years of life.

Services include:
- Bright Beginnings Birth-to-Crawlers Group
- Car seat checks
- Childbirth preparation and birthing options
- Courses for siblings, grandparents and babysitters
- Daddy bootcamp
- Early pregnancy
- Lactation services including breastfeeding classes, support groups, and private outpatient consultations
- Postpartum Adjustment Support Group
- Tours of Mother Baby Unit

Please call 1.888.897.8979 for more information or visit [www.princetonhcs.org/calendar](http://www.princetonhcs.org/calendar).

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**Finding a Pediatrician**
It is extremely important to choose a pediatrician for your baby before he/she arrives. This will allow your pediatrician to see your baby in the hospital and then continue care for him/her once you go home. Many of the pediatricians affiliated with UMCP offer prenatal classes where you can find out more information about them. You can also ask your obstetrician for a recommendation.

For assistance in finding a pediatrician within Princeton HealthCare System, please call the Physician Referral Line at 1.888.PHCS4YOU (1.888.742.7496) or visit [www.princetonhcs.org/directory](http://www.princetonhcs.org/directory).