Information about

Your stay in the Maternity Ward
Breastfeeding
Going home...
Your stay in the Maternity Ward

In accordance with the ministerial directive, we inform you that the average length of stay in the maternity ward will be about 3 days. Therefore, to continue your support after returning home, we organise consultations carried out by a paediatrician and a midwife.
Welcome to the maternity ward

Welcome!

We are pleased to see you and grateful that you have put your trust in us.

This brochure is intended to answer any questions that you may have about pregnancy, childbirth, choosing how to feed your baby and going home. It contains information about the various (administrative and practical) arrangements that need to be made before you come into hospital.

You will also find information on how our maternity department works.

If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

If you would like to visit us to familiarise yourselves with the hospital environment, group visits are arranged every week by our midwives and we have information sessions on pain management led by our anaesthetists and physiotherapists.

If you feel the need (due to anxiety, bad experiences in the past ...) or if you want to bring in your birth plan, it is also possible to have an individual meeting with a midwife at the Women’s Clinic (+32 2 434 43 40).

We also organise evening sessions about breastfeeding.

Information:

Website: www.chirec.be

The admissions office is open every day from 8 am to 6:30 pm. When you pre-register, you will be given more detailed information about the arrangements for your time in hospital: room types, costs etc. . . .

Feel free to ask your gynaecologist if you have any questions about giving birth or about your stay with us (charges etc. ...).
Every year, more than 5,500 births take place in the CHIREC maternity wards, around 3,200 at the Edith Cavell Clinic, 1,200 at the Braine-L’Alleud - Waterloo Hospital and 1,200 at the Saint-Anne Saint-Remi Clinic.

If any problem arises or if a risk of premature delivery arises during your pregnancy, your gynaecologist can admit you to our high-risk maternity ward (MIC: Maternal Intensive Care). This unit is responsible for outpatient monitoring, from Monday to Friday from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, by appointment (+32 2 434 62 13). This department works closely with the neonatal intensive care unit (NIC: Neonatal Intensive Care). These units are among the 19 approved centres in Belgium.

You will find us on the 3rd floor, where the delivery rooms, the high-risk maternity ward (A3), and the postnatal units (B3-C3) are all located.

After ringing the bell outside the delivery room, one of our midwives will come to welcome you.

- Delivery rooms (this number should not be given to family) : +32 2 434 43 78
- Maternity wards :  
  A3 : +32 2 434 43 76
  B3 : +32 2 434 43 74
  C3 : +32 2 434 43 71
- Admissions : +32 2 434 40 55
- General : +32 2 434 40 40

Once you have settled into your room, you can let them know your direct dial telephone number : (+32 2 434 6... followed by your room number).

In accordance with our care policy, based on the recommendations of the BFHI (Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative, a quality initiative supported by the WHO and UNICEF), we strive to ensure that you receive personalised care in accordance with your needs and those of your baby.

When should you come to the delivery room ?

If you have painful contractions, if your water break (loss of amniotic fluid), if there is bleeding or if you notice reduced fetal movements etc. Otherwise, if you are in any doubt, don’t hesitate to call the delivery room on +32 2 434 43 78.

What documents should you bring with you for your admission ?

**Different documents :**

- Mother’s identity card (or passport).
- Your SIS-card and a pre-printed sticker from your mutual health insurer or «mutuelle» (a «vignette»).
- Your marriage certificate (or booklet “carnet”).
- Your pre-registration documents.
- Your admission slip called a “Feuille de liaison” (given to you by your gynaecologist).
- Documents about the donation of cord blood (ask your gynaecologist for these) if you wish to do this).
- The deposit for your admission.
- Your personal items for the delivery room.
- Your personal items for your stay in the maternity ward.
Personal items to bring to the delivery room

FOR YOU

- two short, loose-fitting night shirts,
- a dressing gown,
- slippers,
- one large, absorbent towel,
- toiletries,
- miscellaneous items: books, music (CD, MP3 etc...), biscuits, energy drinks, ... and anything else that will promote your well-being.

FOR BABY

- a long-sleeved body suit,
- a sleeping suit and bonnet
- a blanket,
- (no umbilical-cord bandages and no nappies).

Our philosophy of care is based among other things on the «Mother Friendly» concept, which means that we are committed to meeting your needs and those of your baby during labour and delivery. This means that you can have your chosen supporter alongside you throughout your labour and delivery, drink and eat light snacks, if the situation allows it.

While closely monitoring your health and that of your baby, we try to avoid invasive procedures such as artificial rupture of membranes, acceleration or induction of labour, instrumented delivery, episiotomy and Caesarean section.

How to manage the pain?

Everyone has a different pain threshold. There is no painless childbirth ...

So we would encourage you to:

- follow a course of antenatal preparation that is appropriate for you (physiotherapy, relaxation therapy, haptonomy, emotional preparation for birth etc...) to allow you to get to know your own body better.
- walk, move and try different positions to encourage the progression of labour.

Consider non-drug methods to relieve the pain (dilatation bath, massage, relaxation, a ball etc...).

Finally, if you wish, an anaesthetist is available, 24 hours a day to provide you with an epidural anaesthetic.

Choosing your position for childbirth

You are free to choose your position to give birth but do not forget to discuss this with your gynaecologist beforehand.

Welcome the baby

Welcoming the baby with respect is one of our priorities. If your health and your baby’s allows it, in a quiet and warm environment, you will be invited to have your baby very close to you, skin to skin, and to keep him there for at least an hour. This is a particularly important time to start the process of bonding with your baby. Skin to skin contact helps to make the transition from life in the womb and the outside world more gentle for your child. He will be reassured by some things that he will find familiar (smells, sounds etc.). This is a unique and magical moment.

Your baby will therefore be placed on your chest and, if you choose, she/he can feed as soon as she/he wishes. She/He will not be washed to prevent her/him from losing too many calories through cooling. After about 2 hours, you will be transferred to your maternity room.

Donating cord blood

Donating blood cord means giving life for a second time. Cord blood makes it possible to carry out transplants that can save the lives of patients with serious diseases (leukaemia etc...). Talk to your gynaecologist about this towards the end of your pregnancy.
In the maternity ward

What should you bring for your stay in the maternity ward?

**FOR YOU**
- A few pairs of cotton or disposable panties,
- loose-fitting night shirts or pyjama’s, or even better, open shirts
- breastfeeding bras (which allow you to completely expose the breasts),
- absorbent towels and flannels,
- toiletries

*Advice: a banana-shaped pillow is very useful to support your back or rest your arm on while the baby is feeding (either from the breast or from the bottle...)*

**FOR BABY**
- cotton t-shirts or preferably “one-sies” or “bodies”,
- a few sleeping suits,
- a pair of socks,
- a pair of cotton mittens, (optional)
- some bibs,
- sheets to decorate the cot (“tetra” or “molleton” are recommended),
- toiletries for baby: a gentle soap, a hairbrush (you can buy some products on the maternity ward),
- absorbent towels and washcloths,
- a bath thermometer,
- outdoor clothing for going home day.

You will be staying here for 4 days on average. Plan to have at least one change per day for your baby. You do not need to bring nappies.

*Special tip: you should wash baby’s clothes beforehand with mild soap before use (known as Marseille soap). Other soaps and fabric softeners cause skin irritation for some babies*

Cohabitation Mother-Baby: It is important that your baby remains with you during your stay.

A typical day in the maternity ward?

Our whole team is happy to welcome you to the ward, and we are here to help you throughout your stay. For your information, here is a description of a typical day in our ward:

**7.00 am to 7.30 am:**
- Day staff arrive, briefing by the night shift.
- Breakfast.

**From 8.00 am:**
- Beds are made, breakfast dishes are collected and a midwife will come to care for you and your baby.

**12.00 pm:**
- Lunch.
- Lunch dishes collected.

**1.15 pm:**
- Another visit from the midwife (care, tips, breastfeeding support etc...)

**Between 2.00 pm and 4.00 pm:**
- Dinner.
- Dinner dishes collected, if you have finished your meal.

**8.15 pm:**
- Night staff arrive, briefing by the day shift.

**DURING THE DAY**
You will receive a visit from:
- your gynaecologist,
- the paediatrician,
- a physiotherapist for your exercises.

If you wish, a team of psychologists specialised in pregnancy, motherhood and baby care is available throughout your stay. Simply let the nurses or one of your doctors know that you would like to see them.
Bathing your baby

To reduce energy loss during your baby’s first few days, he will not be washed every day. She/He will have his first bath two days after birth and on the day when you return home. Do not forget the “creases” (neck, behind the ears, groin).

Your baby will be checked each day (looking at her/his colour, the cord etc...). It is recommended to freshen up her/his bottom and genitals during each nappy change.

Visiting hours

Newborn babies and their parents need a lot of peace and quiet; if daddy would like to sleep in the room, simply ask for a rollaway bed (there is a charge for this). Of course it is a pleasure to receive visits, but please ask your parents and friends to come only a few at a time and to respect the designated visiting hours, which are from 3 pm to 8 pm every day. Children are welcome, but please make sure that they stay as quiet as possible, in order to avoid disturbing others.

In order to respect the rest of our mothers and their baby(ies), visits are not allowed before 3.00pm. Visitors are welcomed from 3.00pm to 8.00pm, except for the partner.

For your well being

Please feel free to treat yourselves by visiting the gourmet café on the ground floor of the clinic. The team there will happy to welcome you, and if you prefer, your order can be delivered to your room (telephone extension 4005).

Useful information

Medical information

Several screening tests are carried out during the perinatal period, in order to detect rare diseases or disabilities for which the child has a better prognosis if they are managed from an early stage.

The tests carried out are as follows:

- At birth:
  - screening for haemoglobin disorders.

- From day 3:
  - thyroid tests, trypsin (cystic fibrosis),
  - Guthrie test (phenylketonuria etc...),
  - 17 OH progesterone (adrenal disease).

The results are delivered to your paediatrician after 2 weeks, unless they need to be rechecked or are abnormal.

What are the administrative formalities for registering the birth of your baby?

Every child born in Belgium must be registered at the Town Hall of the municipality of birth” within 15 calendar days of birth. This registration must take place at the Uccle Civil Affairs Office (“Bureau de l’Etat Civil”) at the Uccle Town Hall (Place Vander Elst). There are no exemptions from this law (not even on grounds of nationality).
Procedure for registering your baby’s birth

If you are married:

We will deliver your original identity card, your marriage certificate and the birth certificate of your baby to the Uccle Town Hall. From the 3rd working day onwards and within 15 calendar days, the father (or you) should go to the Uccle Civil Affairs Office (“Bureau de l’État Civil”) at the Uccle Town Hall with her/his identity card or passport. Your official documents will be returned to you at that time and you will receive the documents needed to obtain family benefits and to complete the formalities for your «mutuelle».

If you are not married:

If you wish for your baby to bear her/his father’s name from birth, you must supply the authorities with an anticipated acknowledgement of paternity. To obtain this document, you and the father must visit your Town Hall of residence or Uccle before birth with a medical certificate attesting that you are more than 6 months pregnant (speak to your gynaecologist about this).

- A father who has officially acknowledged paternity prior to the birth can take the official acknowledgement document with him when registering the birth.
- A father who has not completed the official process to acknowledge paternity prior to birth is allowed to register the birth, but only if you accompany him.
- If no acknowledgement of paternity is desired, you must go within 15 calendar days to Uccle Civil Affairs Office (“Bureau de l’État Civil”) at Uccle Town Hall to register the birth. If you are unable to do this within the deadline, please inform our social services.

If the document «Choice of the name Declaration» has not been delivered, the presence of the mother will be required during the child’s statement at the Town Hall, even though you are married.

If this is your 1st child together, you must decide the name she/he will bear. The children you will have later on will bear the exact same surname.

If this is not your 1st child together, she/he will automatically bear the same name as her/his siblings. The Municipality Office will nevertheless ask you to complete the document.

Opening hours of the Uccle Civil Affairs Office
(«bureau de l’État Civil»):

Every working day from 9 am to 3 pm (no lunchtime closing)
Opening hours are different in July and August.
Registration in your own municipality will take place automatically.
Breastfeeding

No matter how you choose to feed your baby, the maternity team is available to help you at all times. You will receive all the information individually that you required.
The following pages set out the benefits of breastfeeding for you and your baby, practical information (breastfeeding for the first time), and general information (colostrum, your baby’s rhythms etc.). The chapter concludes by providing a few book websites on breastfeeding.

Nature provides everything to allow breastfeeding to take place. The great majority of women can feed their baby, no matter what size or shape their nipples are.

**Introduction**

**Breastfeeding in our maternity ward?**

**DURING PREGNANCY:**

How and where to find information about breastfeeding during pregnancy:

- Your gynaecologist and/or paediatrician
- The maternity ward organises information sessions about breastfeeding
- During individual consultations about breastfeeding provided by a midwife
- By reading books, leaflets and websites (references at the end of this brochure)
- Organisations that support and guide breastfeeding (see chapter 5 page 24)

In this hospital we provide a free brochure (in French) called “Allaiter...”. You can obtain this very comprehensive brochure during the organised breastfeeding information sessions, on the maternity ward and from your gynaecologist.

**AFTER CHILDBIRTH:**

If both mother and child are well enough, your baby will be placed on your chest, skin to skin.

Skin to skin contact: stimulates lactation, helps to keep your baby warm and helps you to bond with your baby. This close and special form of contact allows you to observe when your baby is ready to feed.

He will be placed close to your breasts from birth and he will feed when he is ready to do so. Some babies are ready to feed in the first hour of life, while others do not start to feed immediately and take some time to get started.

If your child has to be admitted to the Neonatology department, you can be sure that every effort will be made to allow you to breastfeed despite this period of separation.
Important things to know before you give birth

Colostrum

During your baby’s first few days, he will drink your colostrum. The nutritional value and quantity of this fluid are perfectly suited to meet the baby’s needs (vitamins, antibodies, proteins etc…). Do not forget that at the time of birth the capacity of the baby’s stomach is no more than 10 ml (1 tablespoon).

The baby’s rhythm

Usually the baby will be very alert during the first few hours after its birth. You should present him with the breast if he tries to suck (which means, if he puts his fingers in his mouth, puts out his tongue, makes sucking sounds etc.) or if he opens his eyes wide, don’t wait for him to cry.

Find a comfortable position and make sure your baby is correctly positioned:

• The baby should be face to face with you with his head not turned to the side.
• His mouth should be open wide with his tongue sticking out over his lower gums. • His mouth should cover a large part of the areola.
• His chin should be touching the breast, but his nose should be clear.

For the first few feedings, we advise you to call one of the midwives so that we can ensure that you and your baby are positioned correctly. This is an opportunity to try different feeding positions, either sitting or lying down. You can then choose what suits you best (lying, «classic» sitting position, sitting cross-legged, baby astride you, rugby ball position etc.)

You can offer the breast whenever he asks for it rather than adhering to a fixed rhythm.

From the second and third day he will wake up and ask for a feed more frequently. The number of feeds is important early in your breastfeeding period: 8-12 feeds per 24 hours. This frequency meets the needs of your baby and helps you to produce enough milk.

You should also know that your baby will develop a lot during the first few weeks and the pace of feeds will vary and then become regular. Do not be surprised if your baby is more active and awake at night or at certain times of the day. In fact the «night and day» rhythm is acquired spontaneously during the first few months. You should therefore adjust your rhythm to your baby’s and take a nap whenever you have a chance. A peaceful environment is particularly important when you start breastfeeding. Ensure that you are given peace and your privacy is respected while feeding.

Make use of your stay in the maternity ward to rest as much as possible and try to keep the number of visits under control as far as possible. Do not hesitate to give people a visiting timetable if you are too tired.

At first, you are advised not to offer the baby a dummy or teat, because this can disrupt the process of learning to feed at the breast and may reduce the number of feeds.

If your baby cries and doesn’t want to drink, cuddle her/him.

My questions:

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Cuddling and skin to skin

Skin to skin
This will help:
• to regulate glucose (blood sugar) the first hours of life,
• to stimulate milk production,
• to keep the baby warm,
• the sleep-wake rhythm,
• to promote emotional bonding.

The baby will feel reassured and he will not lose as much weight.

Cuddling
Contrary to what some people think, saying that a need for contact is simply attention-seeking, plenty of cuddling has the opposite effect and helps your baby to build independence.

During the first weeks, it is important to allow your baby to enjoy being in your arms, where he will be calmer and become more familiar with you by having direct skin to skin contact (Mummy or Daddy).

When your breasts become engorged
(sometimes incorrectly called «milk coming in»)

Due to hormonal changes, you will notice after a few days that your breasts temporarily become larger and harder. Your breasts and nipples will also become more sensitive. You will then begin to produce more milk, which fits in perfectly with your baby’s needs.

This period is often accompanied by «baby blues». Your baby may be more active, more awake and feed more often. The nature of these feeds will change. At first the baby receives a very small feed, which encourages him to continue feeding, and after a time you will hear him swallowing greedily.

If the breasts are too engorged, it will need to be reported and monitored by the healthcare team. We have several ways of helping you to be more comfortable. Remember that cuddling your baby and breastfeeding on demand are generally best suited to the needs of infants.

Manual expression of breast milk

The midwives in the maternity ward will teach you this technique from the first day. It may be helpful at any time, either to collect some milk before baby is ready to suck, or in anticipation of a period of separation, or to make it easier to take the breast by making the areola less tense, or finally to relieve breast engorgement.

The advantages of breastfeeding

For your baby
As well as the economic and environmental advantages, breastfeeding:
• Provides optimal nutrition,
• reduces the risk of infection,
• reduces allergies,
• reduces the risk of chronic diseases and childhood cancer,
• reduces obesity,
• strengthens emotional bonding.

For you
Breastfeeding is besides its ease of use:
• creates a hormonal environment that promotes your deep sleep through the release of oxytocin.
• permits rapid uterine involution (the uterus contracts more quickly and reduces blood loss),
• helps you to lose the additional weight you put on during your pregnancy,
• reduces the risks of some breast cancers.
• ...

For most mothers, breastfeeding helps promote the emotional bonding
Websites

- http://www.infor-allaitement.be
- http://www.allaitementmaternel.be
- http://www.one.be

On these sites, you can order some very useful brochures.
Going home

My Questions :

You will no doubt be pleased to leave the maternity ward, but you may also be a little anxious, especially if this is your first baby.

Like most parents, you will probably be dreading the moment when you find yourself «alone» with your baby at home. The first 24 hours after coming home from hospital are often a little more difficult, because you and your baby need to adapt to your new life. It is therefore preferable to organise your return home beforehand (make sure your partner or another familiar person is there, get help with shopping or household tasks etc.) Do not worry, you will soon find your bearings and a new rhythm, away from the routines of the maternity ward.

If you are wondering whether you have enough milk, observe your baby: if he’s active, swallows regularly, has enough wet nappies (5 or 6 full nappies over a 24hr period) and has his bowels open regularly (and the faeces are moist), you can be sure that he is drinking enough! The change in his weight will confirm that your baby is receiving enough milk.

After a few days, you will be happy to be back at home with your family... but if you do have any further questions after you leave, or if you need a bit of reassurance, you can always call on our midwives or our breastfeeding consultant.

Requests for home visits can be made directly to the midwives and nurses who take care of you in the maternity ward or if you have already left, you can call the following number: on +32 2 434 49 64 on weekdays between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm.

Here in the maternity ward we are often happy and surprised to see how quickly new parents become real specialists on their own baby!

Still we will be only too pleased to give you a few (more) tips ...
Get plenty of rest!

Live according to your baby’s rhythm. Try to rest as soon as he goes to sleep. It is important for you to get enough sleep to ‘cope’ otherwise everything will seem more difficult.

Avoid receiving visits during the first week. You need to take time to take good care of yourself...

Do not forget to eat!

A mother should eat like a sport star!

Make life easy yourself: simple, easy to prepare meals will be perfect. Wholemeal bread, vegetables, eggs, pasta, cheese, steak, fish, chicken fillet with some olive oil or rapeseed oil, some fruit... and why not have some chocolate!

Have whatever you fancy, and let people look after you!

If you are breastfeeding, make sure you drink plenty of fluids. Limit your intake of coffee, tea and other stimulating drinks.

Avoid alcoholic drinks, and if you have any questions, don’t hesitate to contact your doctor.

Ask for help

Organising the help you have around you is the best way to make sure you get help where you really need it. Be specific and have confidence to say what you really need.

Your family and friends will be all too happy to help: get your groceries, go to the chemist or bring you a ready-made meal.

This will help you to save precious time for you and your baby.

Your baby’s feeding and sleeping

Keep feeding your baby on demand. Slowly but surely your baby will develop his own feeding pattern. If you breastfeed, constantly cuddling your baby will help him during this transition period.

In the first few weeks, your baby should feed at least 8 times every 24 hours. If he has several bowel movements (moist faeces) in 24 hours (3 to 8 times in 24 hours), he is definitely feeding enough!

Older babies may have dirty nappies less frequently.

You should quickly forget the idea that a baby ‘only’ sleeps and eats!

Some babies sleep a lot, others sleep very little... They also have other needs: to be carried, to be rocked, to be reassured in your arms, to hear your voice, to feel you close to them, to be able to smell you...

You should remember that every child is different and the same solution will not suit every one.

You will soon learn about his needs.
Your rights

Your maternity leave has nearly come to an end and you already have a lot of questions and fears about possible weaning.

Returning to work does not necessarily mean you have to stop breastfeeding!

There are several options to consider that can allow you to stay with your baby:

- If you have a high-risk profession, you can take ‘preventative’ prophylactic breastfeeding leave. Your mutual health insurer (‘mutuelle’) will reimburse you for this and it ends once your baby is 5 months old.
- Traditional breastfeeding leave may be available by agreement with your employer, if you work in a sector where a collective agreement allows for this type of leave (this is unpaid!)
- You also have right to breastfeeding breaks and your employer cannot refuse this. You can make use of this right during the first 7 months of your baby’s life.
- If one of the parents works in the private sector he/she is entitled to a career break for parental leave. The options are: stay at home full-time, work half-time or stay at home 1 day per week. You can take parental leave until your child is 12 years old.
- You can ask for a career break in the form of a ‘time-credit system’. This system is not designed exclusively for child care, and it is equally available to both parents. The forms are the same but the conditions are very different (contact the ONEM for further details).
- You have also right to breastfeeding breaks and your employer cannot refuse this. You can make use of this right during the first 7 months of your baby’s life.

At present, it is essential to inform your employer two months before resuming work.

Talk to your ‘mutuelle’ and the Federal Department of Employment and Labour.

You are entitled to 30 minutes every 4 hours and two periods of 30 minutes during a day of 7½ hours. Your employer must allow you to breastfeed or to express milk in a room provided for that purpose.

- You also have the option of taking unpaid breastfeeding leave if your employer agrees to it.

If you are worried, or if you have any questions about his weight, his rhythms, weaning, sleep, family life... feel free to ask for information and help from your paediatrician, gynaecologist, the psychologists at the maternity ward, the midwives who make home visits, the breastfeeding consultant or other organisations.

There will definitely be moments when you feel exhausted and unable to cope, but this situation should not last very long or make your life feel miserable.

You have set out on a real adventure, and we sincerely wish that your family life will be filled with many joys, both great and small.

### Pursuit of breastfeeding

Pursuit of breastfeeding

WHO recommends the pursuit of breastfeeding for six months

Your rights

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* For more information : Ministry of Employment and Labour, Belliardstreet 51, 1040 Brussels
Tel : 02 233 41 11 or www.meta.fgov.be

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WHO recommends the pursuit of breastfeeding for six months
We hope you will be very happy with the quality of care and the services we provide
during your stay with us.
However we would be grateful if you could let us know how satisfied you are, so that
we can continue to make improvements.

We would therefore be grateful if you could send us any suggestions using the
questionnaire that you received on arrival.

This should be placed in the **Quality Service** box on the ward.

Kindest regards,

The maternity staff.