

# Waterbirth at Mount Auburn Hospital

**Hydrotherapy:** The use of water during labor, either in the shower or in a tub.

**Waterbirth:** Birthing your baby in the water.

At Mount Auburn we have eight Labor and Delivery rooms. Six have tubs for hydrotherapy, one of which is accessible on all sides and approved by the Department of Public Health for waterbirth. The other two rooms have showers. Birthing in the tub has risks, benefits, and safety considerations. Your midwife can discuss these with you ahead of time in the office. As labor unfolds, new concerns may develop. You can expect your care team to discuss them with you as they emerge.

There are some exclusions to waterbirth eligibility, including but not limited to the following scenarios:

- Preterm labor (birthing before 37 weeks of pregnancy)
- Concerns about the baby's heart rate during labor
- Infection diagnosed in labor
- Meconium — baby passing their first bowel movement prior to birth
- Diagnoses such as elevated blood pressure or diabetes in pregnancy, depending on the situation
- Increased risk for shoulder dystocia
- Use of medications for pain relief including narcotics, nitrous oxide, or an epidural
- If your care team feels for any other reason that a waterbirth is not the safest option for you or your baby

If it becomes unsafe for you to have a waterbirth, you may still be able to use hydrotherapy during your labor.

Of note, continuous fetal monitoring and/or the use of Pitocin are not necessarily reasons to avoid waterbirth.

Select providers at Mount Auburn offer waterbirth. If you are interested in having a waterbirth, please bring it up with your provider early in case a transfer of care is necessary to support your desire.

If your birthing experience begins with an induction, you will likely start in a different room and move to the waterbirth room once your active labor has started (subject to availability). If you arrive in spontaneous labor and the waterbirth room is available, we will be happy to settle you and your birthing team into that room. If you are in the waterbirth room and you are no longer a candidate for a waterbirth, you may be asked to move to a different room to allow another patient the option of a waterbirth.

We are unable to accommodate requests to reserve the waterbirth room, and we cannot guarantee the availability of the waterbirth tub. We make every effort to prioritize availability for people desiring waterbirth.

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The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) have differing opinions and recommendations surrounding waterbirth.

Please follow the links below to read these statements.

[ACOG: Immersion in Water During Labor and Delivery Committee Opinion:](#)

<https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2016/11/immersion-in-water-during-labor-and-delivery>

[ACNM: Hydrotherapy During Labor and Birth Position Statement:](#)

<https://midwife.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Hydrotherapy-During-Labor-and-Birth.pdf>

We also recommend [Evidence Based Birth](#) for more information on waterbirth:

<https://evidencebasedbirth.com/waterbirth/>