Welcome to Birthways
A Helpful Guide for Expectant Moms and New Parents
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Welcome to Birthways

Congratulations! We look forward to caring for you and your baby! Birthways at Mary Greeley Medical Center is where expectant mothers from throughout central Iowa come to deliver their babies. We welcome more than 1,000 newborns into the world each year. Our unit is designed with you and your family in mind, providing you a comfortable and soothing place to have your baby.

Please take some time to learn about our Birthways unit at www.mgmc.org/Birthways. We’ve put together lots of resources to help prepare you for your pregnancy, delivery day and beyond.

YOUR NURSES AND PROVIDERS

What makes Birthways so unique is our personal approach. Birthways is staffed by caring, highly trained professionals with many years of experience:

- All physicians are board-certified in their specialty.
- 24 hour anesthesia coverage.
- Nurse-midwives are certified by the American College of Nurse-Midwives.
- Pediatric hospitalist program
- All registered nurses are specially trained for mother baby care.
- Lactation consultants and breastfeeding experts are available around the clock.
- Birthways provides a discharge planner to help you and your baby transition home.

PREPARING FOR BABY

To prepare you for your arrival, we recommend you take advantage of one of our class offerings:

- Big Brother/Big Sister
- Childbirth Education
- Breastfeeding

You can register, or learn more about our other classes, by visiting www.mgmc.org/events and clicking on Birthways. If unable to register for classes online, call 515-239-2444.

PRE-REGISTRATION

Pre-registration is necessary to ensure that we have all of your pertinent insurance and contact information. Please make sure you have your insurance cards handy before completing the online pre-registration form, which can be found by visiting www.mgmc.org/birthways and clicking on the Pre-Registration and Insurance Matters link.

SCHEDULING ELECTIVE PROCEDURES

For some women it is necessary to schedule an induction to labor. If it is elective, it is the recommendation from ACOG and AAP that this is after 39 completed weeks of gestation to allow the baby’s lungs to mature and for your body to be ready for labor and a successful vaginal delivery. For some women there may be a medical reason for induction of labor. This decision is a discussion between you and your provider. On Birthways, we try very hard to accommodate all labor patients. However, there may
be times that there are too many patients that arrive in labor and we may need to postpone elective procedures so safe care can be given to all patients. We appreciate your patience if this happens and hope you understand we want all our patients to have a wonderful experience that meets their expectations.

YOUR STAY

At Birthways, we strive to support our new families as much as possible. We have 13 specially designed, homelike rooms that allow you to have your labor, delivery and recovery all in one room. Each of these rooms includes a whirlpool bathtub to help provide comfort while in labor, along with other amenities, including:

- Flat-screen television with DVD player tucked in a solid wood armoire.
- A special chair or sofa that converts to a bed for your support person to stay overnight.
- Wireless internet access for your convenience.
- Squat bars and labor balls available upon request.

We also have nine regular private rooms. Patients are able to order anything off of our cafeteria menu to be delivered directly to the room from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and all rooms are equipped with cable television and a private bathroom with shower.

CESAREAN DELIVERY

In case of Cesarean birth, the two operating rooms on Birthways allow you and your baby to receive the care you both need on the same unit.

NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

Having the right people in place to provide special attention for your baby makes all the difference. That’s why Birthways has a level II neonatal intensive and intermediate care unit with the latest technology for care of critically ill infants.

The NICU offers specially trained staff, including two pediatric hospitalists, who specialize taking care of newborns and children in the hospital.

BUILD THE BOND

Our spacious and private labor/delivery/recovery/postpartum (LDRP) rooms provide a wonderful environment for bonding. We allow you and the baby to room in together. This practice provides you the opportunity to learn your baby’s hunger cues and night behaviors with the support...
of the nursing staff. On Birthways we encourage rooming in with your newborn as much as possible. The safest place for your baby to sleep is in the crib on his/her back. If your baby needs to be out of your room, we have skilled 24-hour staff that can watch over the infant.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended “continuous rooming-in” since 2005 and now other organizations like the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses; Centers for Disease Control; and Joint Commission (they accredit our hospital) agree it is best practice for hospital birthing units. It allows for more skin to skin contact, which makes for a smooth transition to life outside the womb and early parent response to babies’ feeding cues.

**QUIET IS GOOD MEDICINE**

Throughout the entire hospital, we stress the importance of quiet as part of our focus on excellent patient care. Visitors are required to check-in at the nurse’s station, so if you’re just not up to visitors, we’ll let them know. Every afternoon from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. we ask that no visitors come to the floor. Current visitation hours will be communicated to you on admission and posted on the unit. We will strictly enforce the hours to protect the quiet environment for our patients. Remember while your visitors are home sleeping at night you are awake feeding your baby. You need your rest and your little one does too.

**YOUR VISITORS**

Your birthing experience is all about you, your baby and your family. At Birthways, we understand that you want your friends and loved ones to meet your baby and share in your experience. Please read these visitor recommendations from the McFarland Clinic Pediatricians and Pediatric Hospitalists:

*We, the McFarland Clinic pediatricians, would like to extend our warm congratulations to you on the upcoming birth of your baby! The incredible journey and responsibility of raising a happy, healthy child from birth to adulthood starts with good prenatal care and keeping your focus on your child’s health. We view the pediatrician’s role in this journey as supportive and educational and look forward to working with you as partners to keep your infant healthy.*

*We understand the need to share the joy of the birth of your baby with your family and close friends. While these visitors can offer wonderful support to you during your stay at Birthways, they can also interfere with your need for rest and introduce infections to you and your infant. The spread of infectious illnesses in the hospital is especially worrisome during the winter and flu seasons. In addition, newborn babies have weak immune systems and can become very ill and sometimes die from illnesses that are considered mild in adults.*
To keep your baby healthy and reduce the risks of illness to you and your baby, we would like you to consider our recommendations in regards to visitors on Birthways:

- Limit visitors to those that are very important to you and your immediate family. Although all love to share in the joy of a newborn, many well meaning friends do not realize your need for rest and privacy.

- Make sure that visitors do not deprive you of rest or interfere with breastfeeding and bonding with your baby. Birthways provides a mid-afternoon “Quiet Time” period to assist you in getting rest. Please ask visitors to schedule around this time.

- Other than your baby’s brothers and sisters, it is wise to limit children visitors. Toddlers and school age children are the first in our community to spread seasonal illnesses. Potential visitors who have a cough, fever within the last 24 hours, open skin sores or feel ill, should NOT visit Birthways.

- We recommend that all parents, close family contacts and day care providers receive influenza vaccines during the fall/winter months and be updated with the tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis vaccine to protect your infant from these potentially deadly diseases for infants.

- Even though it is your responsibility to decide who visits you and your baby while you are on Birthways, both the Birthways staff and we, the pediatricians, are happy to answer any questions concerning these recommendations and assist you during your stay on Birthways.

**NEWBORN SECURITY**

In addition to being locked from the late evening hours until the early morning hours, Birthways features a comprehensive security system to protect our newborns:

- Matching, non-removable identification bands for baby, mom and one person of the mother’s choosing.

- Electronic transmitters lock exit doors.

- Surveillance cameras monitor each exit off the floor at all times.

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

We offer a professional photo session in your room, personalized for each family.

![Photo](image)

**DECISIONS, DECISIONS**

From the time you first found out you were pregnant, you’ve been making decisions. There are two in particular that you may have already decided on, but they will need to be confirmed on delivery day.

- If you give birth to a son, we’ll need to know if you plan on having him circumcised. Circumcision is not typically medically necessary, and is usually elective, meaning it is your choice whether to have it done.

- We’ll need to know if you plan on breastfeeding. All staff receive additional education to help you succeed with breastfeeding. We also have breastfeeding experts, including lactation consultants, available to provide additional support. A page has been created on our website dedicated entirely to breastfeeding to help answer any questions you may have. To learn more, visit www.mgmc.org/breastfeeding.

On the next few pages we’ve included information about breastfeeding.
The many health benefits of breastfeeding include:

- Less risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Fewer ear and respiratory infections for your baby.
- Enhances newborn brain development.
- Less diarrhea and constipation for your baby.
- Less risk of developing ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease and celiac disease for your baby.
- Less risk your baby will be overweight.
- Less risk of diabetes for your baby and you.
- Less risk of postpartum depression for you.
- Less risk of breast and ovarian cancer for you.
- Faster recovery for you.

When you begin breastfeeding, you’ll want to nurse your baby 8-12 times in the first 24 hours. Many babies nurse more often. Allow your baby to nurse as long as he/she desires. Don’t limit the length of feeding. Many babies nurse from only one breast at each feeding in the first few days after birth. If the baby feeds from only one breast, use the alternate breast with the next feeding.

Many babies are sleepy in the first 24 hours or so after birth. Full-term, healthy newborns are born with adequate fluid stores, so supplementation with water or formula is not recommended unless there is a medical problem. If your baby nursed well after delivery, then you can rest assured that when your baby becomes more alert, breastfeeding will continue to go well.

- It is a good idea to awaken your sleepy baby and attempt to nurse every 1 to 3 hours.
- Some babies awaken easily with gentle stimulation such as unwrapping and a diaper change.
• Try holding your baby skin-to-skin against your body and express a drop of colostrum into his/her mouth.
• If your baby does not awaken after 10 to 15 minutes of trying, put baby skin-to-skin against your body and try again in an hour.
• If your baby does awaken to nurse, you may need to continue with some gentle stimulation to keep your baby feeding. Try lifting the baby’s upper arm, stroking legs, feet and head.
• After long periods of sleep, some babies go through a marathon nursing phase where they want to nurse all the time and can’t be put down. This feeding, known as cluster feeding, is normal for night time when your prolactin levels are highest for making milk.
• Allowing your baby to eat as often as he/she wants is best. If your baby does finally fall asleep during this frequent feeding phase, you can usually get a break from nursing if your baby is held and cuddled. When you put your baby down, he/she may soon awaken and want to nurse again.
• Remember, the more you nurse, the sooner your milk comes in!

Breastfeeding is natural for you and your baby, but it is a skill that needs to be learned. Speak up and ask questions about breastfeeding before your baby is born and while you are in the hospital.

No matter how you feed your baby, life with a newborn can be challenging. For the first several weeks, most babies do not eat and sleep on a regular schedule. The following tips can help you continue breastfeeding when you return home:
• If you encounter any difficulty nursing, ask for help. Problems have solutions.
• Keep your baby skin-to-skin after birth to ease your baby’s transition from womb to the outside world, and put your baby to breast as soon as possible after birth.
• Continue to nurse your baby every 1 to 3 hours, or any time your baby is awake, has their hands to their mouth, moves their tongue, or turns to a touch of the cheek. This is the language your baby uses to say, “I’m hungry.”

• Use your baby’s hunger cues to decide when to nurse—not the clock. An abundant milk supply is related to the frequency and completeness of milk removal from the breast.
• Wait until feeding is going well before introducing a bottle or pacifier. Early use of bottles and pacifiers often leads to feeding difficulties and early weaning.

Our Internationally Board Certified Lactation Consultants are available during your hospital stay as well as in an outpatient setting. All breastfeeding moms receive a complimentary visit with one of our lactation consultants. We also recommend the National Breastfeeding Hotline (800-994-9662), which is available Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. to answer questions that may arise. The Office on Women’s Health is also a great resource and has an excellent website that we encourage you to visit by going to www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding.

BIRTHWAYS PACIFIER POLICY

All Birthways staff receive education and training to help you and your baby get the hang of feeding.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends not introducing a pacifier until breastfeeding is well established, or between 3-4 weeks. Then it is recommended at nap time and bedtime until your baby is six
months old as pacifiers have been shown to decrease the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

So to get feeding off to a good start, we do not use pacifiers for healthy babies in the hospital. Each time your baby signals that they are hungry by cues like rooting or sucking on their lips or fists, is wide awake, or is making sucking movements with their mouth, we will encourage you to feed your baby rather than delay a feeding by using a pacifier.

When newborns are fed instead of given a pacifier in response to these feeding cues, your baby is less likely to have poor weight gain and jaundice and you are less likely to have problems with engorgement. Sometimes babies still want to suck even following a good feeding. In a few weeks, or once feeding is well underway and your baby is gaining weight, giving your baby a finger to suck on or a pacifier, can be an option.

Birthways will only use pacifiers for procedures like circumcision and they will be discarded after the procedure. This is for any newborn regardless of feeding choice. Listed below are other research based reasons not to use pacifiers:

- A decrease in breast stimulation and milk removal may delay the mother’s milk from coming in and lead to long-term low milk supply, as well as early weaning.
- Babies suckle differently on a pacifier than on a breast. The pacifier’s shape lends itself easily to a pursed lip and a tight jaw posture, which contributes to a painful, shallow latch with little or no milk removal.
- The surface of the pacifier is irregular and porous and when combined with moisture and room temperatures can lead to yeast growth, which may contribute to thrush infections. Pacifiers can also increase the risk of ear infection and dental problems, and the eventual weaning from a pacifier may be a great source of stress for both the child and parent.

Please feel free to call Birthways at 515-239-2444 if you have any questions about this policy.

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**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**CAN I USE MY CELL PHONE ON THE BIRTHWAYS FLOOR?**

Yes, cell phones are permitted on Birthways. A phone is also provided in your room. You can make local calls at no charge or use a calling card or call collect for long distance.

**SHOULD I CALL BEFORE I COME?**

We suggest calling your provider during office hours or First Nurse after office hours before coming to the hospital. Available 24 hours, First Nurse can be reached by calling:

- Ames: 515-239-6877
- Anywhere in Iowa: 800-524-6877

**IF I BRING MY LAPTOP, IS INTERNET ACCESS AVAILABLE?**

Yes, you may check your email on the computer in our visitors lounge, or if you have a laptop, free wireless is available for your convenience.

**WHERE DO I PARK?**

Please take advantage of our free valet parking, available Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. If you do come through the Emergency Department, please have your vehicle moved from the Emergency Department lot as soon as possible.

**HOW DO I GET INTO THE HOSPITAL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?**

After 9 p.m., enter the hospital through the Emergency Department.
Important Numbers:

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