

FAQ's – water birth

We have had our pool delivered, should we set it up?

We would advise making sure the box has all its contents and that the hose fits on your taps/faucets (if not see below)

You can inflate the pool to see how long it takes, where it will be best placed etc. just don't put the liner in as this needs to be kept as clean as possible to avoid infection. If you have cats or small people in the house, it may be best to leave the pool deflated until you start your labour, this will avoid damage from sharp claws, toys etc.

Your midwife will have a thermometer but you may want to purchase a fun, floating thermometer (like a duck) so the temperature is constantly visible and can be adjusted when necessary. These are inexpensive and a good investment for your new little one's bathtime.

We have modern taps/faucets and the hose adaptor won't fit, how do we fill the pool?

With more and more choices in bathroom and kitchen fittings, a common problem is managing to get the hose attached to a water source. Never fear though, you can place the pump into a sink or bathtub of water and it will pump it into the pool using the hose. It is slightly slower, depending on your home water pressure, but still effective.

I'd love a pool for my home birth, does the water stay warm?

The short answer to this is no! However, it is very easily managed and doesn't need to be a problem. Your midwife will advise you of the optimal time for getting into the pool, this is because if you enter too early in your labour, it may relax you so much that your labour slows or stops. The water for labour can be adjusted to your comfort using the hose provided and if it's getting too full and needs to be emptied a little before adding more hot water, this is easily achieved by a clean bucket or two.

If you plan to birth your baby in the pool, the water temperature should be 37 degrees and your midwife is experienced and skilled in knowing when birth is imminent. A thermometer will be used to check the temperature at regular intervals.

How do we empty the pool?

The pool comes with a pump which is placed in the bottom of the pool and the water is extracted via the hose into the nearest sink/toilet/drain. Once the majority of water has been extracted and no longer reaches the pump filter, the pool can be carried outside to be emptied into a drain or the garden.

We have a useful video on our website showing pool set-up for a home birth and you can watch it here <https://youtu.be/VHxk69050yg?t=12>

I like the idea of being in water for labour but I don't want my baby born in the pool, can I get out for the birth?

Of course, the buoyancy of water is an excellent form of relaxation and pain relief. When the time comes, your midwife will assist you to adopt a comfortable position for birth on 'dry land' if you wish. A large warm and cosy bathrobe or dressing gown is ideal to have on hand as you will feel chilly if you're wet.

What should I wear in the pool?

You should wear whatever you feel most comfortable in, be that nothing at all, a bikini, or a big baggy t-shirt. Most people tend to go with a bikini or tankini style top with or without bottoms, but whatever you decide to wear will need to be easily removable when wet. Also, remember that whilst a big baggy t-shirt may seem like the most dignified item, when it's wet the extra material may make you feel quite chilly.

How will my baby breathe under water?

Your baby won't take its first breath until it gets the 'trigger' of the change in temperature of air on its face as it's brought up to the water surface. This is why it's so important that the water temperature is kept at 37 degrees, the same temperature as your body. Oxygen is still being provided by the umbilical cord from the placenta and newborn babies have what is commonly known as a 'dive reflex' which means that instead of inhaling fluid, they swallow it. Interestingly, babies have this ability until around six months of age.

Resources:

<https://privatemidwives.com/resource-library/>

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

<https://waterbirth.org/>

<https://www.nct.org.uk/labour-birth/different-types-birth/water-birth/how-labour-water-or-have-water-birth>