

Prenatal care and birthing services at Henrico Doctors' Hospital

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Labor and delivery

Before your hospital stay

Scheduled induction and cesarean section procedures

Once your doctor's office schedules your induction or cesarean section with us, we will schedule you for a pre-admission appointment with a nurse in our labor and delivery department. This appointment will take approximately an hour and a half. On the day of your appointment you will sign in at the outpatient registration desk, located near the Forest Lobby entrance of Henrico Doctor's Hospital, and you will be guided through your appointment by our staff.

During your appointment, the nurse will answer all your questions and:

- Go over educational materials related to labor and delivery from admission to discharge, including breastfeeding, if desired
- Take a complete medical history and perform blood work
- Review and discuss applicable forms for your delivery type, authorization for tubal ligation, and circumcision preference, as applicable
- Give you final instructions for your procedure

What to pack and bring to the hospital

- Essential documents, such as photo identification, insurance card and hospital forms
- Your written birth preferences
- Icees or popsicles (labeled with your name)
- Money for vending machines and on-site food options
- If you bring your own pillow, it should be in a non-white pillowcase
- A few sets of loose-fitting, comfortable clothes
- Nightgown, robe, socks and slippers
- Electronics with chargers (phone, camera, laptop)
- Toiletries (hair, body and dental care products, eyeglasses or contact lenses, etc.)
- Comfortable nursing bra and breast pump, if you are using one
- A breastfeeding pillow (for example, Boppy or Breast Friend-brand pillows)
- An outfit for your baby to wear home
- Infant car seat

Postpartum underwear and sanitary pads will be provided, but you may also bring your own.

During labor and delivery

Triage rooms

Immediately before your labor or scheduled cesarean section, you will stay in our private and comfortable labor triage rooms. Once you are in triage, our staff will work with you to establish your birthing care plan.

Birthing rooms

Our birthing rooms are designed to provide a comfortable and safe birthing experience for you and your baby. We offer birth balls, peanut balls, options for squatting and various other labor and delivery tools. Designed to accommodate family members and guests, our birthing rooms include a sleeper sofa for your support person, private bathroom, flat screen television and soft lighting and décor. After you give birth, your baby will stay with you in this calm space. Birthing rooms are equipped with a baby warmer table and camera so you can view your baby on the television screen should your baby need to be on the warmer table.

Cesarean section rooms

Our obstetric operating rooms are equipped with the latest technology and are specifically designed for both safety and comfort. During uncomplicated cesarean section deliveries, your support person will be able to join you for your procedure and your baby's birth. As always, your baby will remain with you whenever possible.

Visitors

During labor and delivery, you and your support person may have two additional guests in your birthing room (this means only three persons in addition to you and your baby may occupy the room at any given time). Guests must be over the age of 12 for the safety of you and your baby.

After the baby is born and you have had time to bond and rest skin-to-skin, you may have as many guests as you like during regular hospital visiting hours (9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.), including baby's siblings.

Equipment and technology

We use the latest technologies to ensure a safe birth and help you be as comfortable as possible. These technologies include intravenous (IV) pumps programmed to eliminate medication errors, patient-controlled analgesia (PCEA) pumps and several types of fetal monitors.

Fetal monitor

We maintain fetal monitoring during labor and delivery to track your contractions and your baby's heart rate. The nurses' station is equipped with central monitoring so the nurse can remotely observe you and your baby in your room. We offer wireless fetal monitoring as well, which allows you to walk around freely during labor, or an intermittent fetal monitoring protocol for low-risk patients wishing to remain mobile in labor.

Immediately after birth

After your baby is born, your support person can stay with you as long as you are in the hospital, and our nurses and pediatricians aim to do the majority of your baby's care right at your bedside.

Heart-2-Heart

Babies who are snuggled skin-to-skin after birth nurse better and have more stable temperatures and blood sugars. Our Heart-2-Heart program is designed to take advantage of these health benefits and to create a closer bond between you and your baby. Heart-2-Heart encourages continuous skin-to-skin bonding between you and your baby for an hour or more after birth. If you are unable to hold your baby immediately, you can designate a support person to hold baby skin-to-skin.

Apgar scoring

Apgar scoring helps us determine if your baby is in need of extra care immediately after birth. The Apgar score is used worldwide to monitor your baby's adjustment to life outside the womb by measuring heart rate, respiration, muscle tone, and responses to stimulation and color. The Apgar score is performed twice – once at one minute and once at five minutes after your baby is born.

Delayed cord clamping

At Henrico Doctor's Hospital, we stay up-to-date on the most current research that keeps you and your baby safe and healthy during labor, delivery and beyond. Current evidence has helped us understand that letting the umbilical cord pulsate for a little while before cutting it helps prevent anemia in infants, so we offer delayed cord clamping after birth.

Breastfeeding and bottle feeding support

We encourage breastfeeding as soon as your baby shows readiness to eat after birth. Our experienced nursing staff and certified lactation consultants can help you get off to a successful start. We also offer free breast pumps during your stay with us, and other lactation equipment for rent or purchase upon discharge.

Our hospital promotes breastfeeding as the optimal choice for mother and baby. However, we also support an informed decision to partially or fully formula-feed your baby as well. If you prefer to pump your milk and bottle feed, we can help you get off to a great start. If you choose to feed your baby formula, we will help you with positioning your baby, safe bottle feeding and recommending the right amount for your baby's tiny stomach.

Postpartum Care

After you and your baby are rested, you will be transported to one of our 29 postpartum rooms for recovery. These rooms feature low lighting, soothing décor, a private bathroom with a shower, sleeper sofa for your support person and flat screen television.

You and your baby will receive personalized attention from our skilled postpartum care teams and your nurse will be available to you at all times. Our method of care enables our nurses to spend more time in your room when you need coaching, encouragement or advice.

During your stay

Your pediatrician will be notified when your baby is born and will see your baby as soon as time permits, either that day or the following morning. If you have not chosen a pediatrician, we have doctors on-site that can care for your baby. If you choose circumcision, it may be performed by an obstetrician after the doctor's evaluation.

During your stay, a pediatrician will perform a series of tests to make sure your baby does not need additional care or treatment before symptoms occur. Tests include:

- **Metabolic screening:** A simple blood test used to determine if your baby has any of a series of metabolic disorders; results will be sent to your baby's pediatrician
- **Hearing test:** All infants are [screened for hearing impairment](#) before hospital discharge
- **Critical congenital heart defect (CCHD) testing:** A simple and painless test that measures your baby's pulse and blood oxygen levels

Length of stay

Your delivery type and pediatrician will determine your length of stay. If you have a vaginal birth without complications, you might stay in the hospital for one or two nights; or if you have a cesarean-section birth, you might need to stay three or more nights.

Meal times

Meals are served three times daily at 8:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. We are able to accommodate special dietary needs upon request or you are welcome to bring your own food.

Nutrition room

Our nutrition room is equipped with complimentary snacks, coffee and drinks for you and your support person to recharge after delivery and during your stay. There is a refrigerator available for special dietary needs.

The vital statistics office and your baby's birth certificate

The vital statistics office is located in the postpartum unit and is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Your baby's proof of birth letter will be provided by one of our vital statistics clerks before you leave the hospital. The clerk will submit your baby's birth certificate paperwork to the state and the birth certificate will be mailed to you in a few weeks.

Newborn photo service

We work with [Mom365](#), a professional photography studio, to capture images of your new arrival. You can purchase or access these photos via their secure website so you can view and share them with your friends and family.

High-risk pregnancy

Henrico Doctors' Hospital has more experience caring for high-risk pregnancies than anyone else in the area. Our specialized doctors, known as perinatologists or maternal-fetal medicine specialists, have set the standards for care that other hospitals in the area now follow. As Richmond's leading perinatology specialists, we give you access to a team of experts including nurse educators, genetic counselors and certified ultrasound technologists.

Perinatology and high-risk pregnancy services

Our perinatologists, who work with you before baby is born, and our neonatologists, who work with you after birth, have advanced training in caring for high-risk pregnancies. These doctors work with obstetricians, midwives and other healthcare providers to deliver an optimal care plan tailored to your specific health issues or risk factors. Additionally, throughout your stay with us, our high-risk perinatal nurse navigator will help you understand and make your way through the process safely and comfortably.

High-risk perinatal nurse navigator

When you are told that you or your baby may have special needs during or after delivery at Henrico Doctors' Hospital, it is understandable that you may have many questions. Our perinatal nurse navigator is here to answer those questions and to make sure that the necessary resources are available for you and your baby.

If you are high-risk for labor and delivery, your doctor will explain why you require additional services and may refer you to a perinatologist. Either your doctor or the perinatologist will then refer you to our perinatal nurse navigator. Our perinatal nurse navigator will contact you and help coordinate appointments, provide information and make plans to ensure that your delivery experience is a safe and special one. Our perinatal nurse navigator may help you schedule a tour of the neonatal care units and/or a consultation with a neonatologist, a consultation with an anesthesiologist, social worker or pediatric surgeon.

High-risk pregnancy indicators

Potential high-risk pregnancy factors may include:

- A history of recurrent pregnancy loss
- A history of premature labor and/or birth
- A history of underweight babies
- A pregnancy with multiple babies
- A chronic medical illness, such as hypertension, diabetes, renal disease or lupus
- A family history of complex pregnancy or genetic conditions
- Advanced maternal age at the time of delivery

Preconception counseling

If you have a family history of or think you might be at risk for pregnancy complications, you may want to see a perinatologist before becoming pregnant. Our team, including genetic counselors, will give you the advice you need to make informed decisions about your reproductive health. Once you choose a course of action, you'll receive our continued guidance and support.

High-risk antepartum unit

Our high-risk antepartum unit monitors the health of you and your baby to prevent, identify and treat complications. You may need to stay in this unit until delivery or you may be discharged and need to return intermittently or frequently, depending on the circumstances.

No matter why you are required to stay with us in our high-risk antepartum unit, we strive to make your stay comfortable and to achieve the healthiest outcome possible for you and your baby. Our high-risk antepartum unit offers you a room with a sleeper sofa, refrigerator, television with cable and hospital newborn education channel access, individualized menus, fruit baskets and healthy snacks. If needed, we also provide activities and snacks for your young children when they visit you.

Additionally, Henrico Doctor's Hospital is proud to be the only hospital in Central Virginia with a high-risk antepartum team that includes a March of Dimes family support specialist providing education and support for families of premature and sick newborns.

Perinatal bereavement

We offer multiple resources to help you and your loved ones who are facing the tragic loss of an infant. We provide a support group, annual memorial service, annual candle lighting and other community resources.

[View our perinatal mental health resources PDF](#) for more information about Henrico Doctors' Hospital's services for bereaved parents.

Neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)

Henrico Doctors' Hospital is always ready to offer the highest-quality care for even the tiniest and most critically ill newborns at Central Virginia's only neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) certified by the Joint Commission in prematurity and with neonatologists on-site 24/7.

Our NICU is equipped with the most advanced technology and staffed by highly trained specialists and nurses. If your baby needs specialized, intensive care, he or she will be admitted to one of our 20 state-of-the-art Level III NICU beds. When your baby is healthy enough to graduate from the NICU, he or she will benefit from one of our 21 Level II progressive care nursery (PCN) beds.

Lactation support

Lactation support is available to families with a baby in the NICU or PCN. Even when your baby can't nurse yet, you can create a stored milk supply for him or her in our specially designated refrigerator.

Family-centered care

Our commitment to family-centered care means we recognize and respect the special relationship among family members, including your newest additions. We believe mothers and their support persons are important members of our interdisciplinary neonatal care team. You are encouraged to spend as much hands-on time with your baby as possible. Siblings, grandparents and other visitors are also welcome, two at a time, and our NICU is open to guests at all times, except from 6:45 a.m. – 7:45 a.m. and from 6:45 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.

“Cuddlers”

Our units are designed to be safe and nurturing places for babies and their families. We control lighting and noise to be considerate of infants' developmental needs. You'll find family lounge areas, as well as resources to help your entire family learn about caring for your new baby. Henrico Doctors' Hospital even has volunteers called “Cuddlers,” who help hold and cuddle babies when parents have to return to work or care for other siblings.

Support

We understand that having a baby is a big deal, and having a baby with special healthcare needs can be even more overwhelming. That's why we were the first in Central Virginia to offer the Developmental Follow-up Clinic and the March of Dimes' [NICU Family Support program](#). We use the Developmental Follow-Up Clinic to check on you and your baby after you have been discharged from hospital care, and the NICU Family Support program assigns a person dedicated to you to provide education and support about your baby's special healthcare needs.

We also offer the March of Dimes', "Share My Story" support group along with other weekly support groups on topics such as:

- Breastfeeding
- Newborn infant care
- Infant massage
- Relaxation and guided imagery
- Baby basics
- Infant calming techniques (Kangaroo Care)
- Preparation for labor and delivery, postpartum and stays in our neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)

Additional Services

Classes

At Henrico Doctors' Hospital, we offer an education and care plan for your entire pregnancy. This plan features customized classes, including prenatal care, planning for a low intervention birth, baby basics, safety and much more. We even have an e-Learning class for parents who can't travel or want to learn from the comfort of their homes.

See all of our [classes at Henrico Doctors' Hospital](#) for additional details.

Alternative birth options

We recognize the need for low-intervention birth options and offer midwifery services and welcome doulas if you choose to use one for the birth of your baby. We also offer low-intervention birth classes and tours. Some of the alternative birth options we offer include:

Certified nurse midwife services

A certified nurse midwife (CNM) is a licensed, independent healthcare provider with prescriptive authority defined as a primary care provider under the law. CNMs focus on healthy pregnancies and uncomplicated births. For women who are looking for this low-intervention, high-touch birth option, Henrico Doctors' Hospital is the place for you – we have CNMs on staff with on-site physicians for collaboration if needed.

Doula services

A doula is a trained and experienced individual who provides continuous physical, emotional and informational support to the mother and her support person before, during and just after birth. A doula's primary purpose is to help you decide the kind of birth you want to have – natural or with pain relief – and to help you properly achieve that birth. At Henrico Doctors' Hospital, we welcome a doula if you choose to use one during your birth. For more information about doulas or to find a doula that's right for you, please visit mybirthrva.com, richmonddoulas.org or thehealthybirth.com.

Hydrotherapy

If you want to labor in warm water, we have a private space with a tub available for water immersion (hydrotherapy) during labor. We offer wireless, waterproof monitoring as needed and every room has a private shower.

The Lactation Center

At Henrico Doctors' Hospital, we believe in the importance of breastfeeding and understand the long-lasting benefits for you and your baby. Learning how to breastfeed can be challenging, especially in the beginning, but our staff at The Lactation Center is here to help your family get a healthy start. Our [international board certified lactation consultants \(IBCLC\)](#) provide clinical expertise in the management of complicated breastfeeding issues while you're in the hospital or after you've gone home. As healthcare team members we work with you and your doctor to assess your specific difficulties and develop an individualized plan with you to improve your breastfeeding experience. To make an appointment, or to learn more about The Lactation Center, please call (804) 289-4977.