

Quality Report Card

Licking Memorial Health Systems



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MATERNITY CARE

Education on Low-intervention Births

Low-intervention births are on the rise as women desire to have more control over their birthing experience. In recent years, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) has updated their recommendations on limited interventions during labor and delivery for low-risk pregnancies. These guidelines suggest that limited medical intervention methods produce the best outcomes for low-risk pregnancies.

Relaxation, preparation and knowledge are essential aspects of a positive birth experience. Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) focuses on creating a family-centered experience to ensure that mothers receive the highest quality maternity care. The staff of obstetric and neonatal professionals collaborate with the mother and her support group to craft an individualized birthing plan to meet her expectations and provide a positive birthing experience.

“Our staff offers a no-judgement environment to discuss the mother’s expectations and desires for her birthing experience,” said Heather Burkhart, Vice President Acute Care Services at LMH. “Women who want to have a low-intervention birth need to talk with their physician at the prenatal visit and discuss why natural childbirth appeals to them.”

There are a number of comfort measures that provide natural pain relief and can be very effective during labor and childbirth. Birthing techniques such as patterned breathing, relaxation and visualization strategies can help a woman focus her energy to manage pain. Patterned breathing enhances oxygen flow to the baby and is vital to the contracting uterus. Relaxation techniques that focus on the five senses such as soft lighting in the delivery room, music therapy, aromatherapy

and massage can increase feelings of comfort and tranquility, relieve stress, and relax tense muscles.

Movement and position changes are critical to help a woman experience less pain during labor. Upright positions such as sitting, standing, and walking tend to be the most comfortable for laboring women. Moving around during labor may help to ease discomfort by shifting pressure and can help labor progress with the simple effect of gravity. Sitting on a birthing ball keeps the baby properly aligned in the pelvis and encourages pelvic mobility. It can be used in the hands and knees position to decrease pressure on the hands and wrists.

“Our nurses are trained in a variety of labor and positioning techniques that can be utilized to ease pain and increase comfort,” Heather said. “We are open to allowing the mother to use whatever birthing technique she wishes. Our main goal is to keep a mother and her baby safe. The benefit of having a low-intervention birth at LMH is that the mother has immediate access to emergency services should the need arise.”

LMH offers a variety of childbirth and parenting programs to prepare expectant mothers and their coaches for what to expect while in labor, through birth and into postpartum care. The following classes are offered through First Impressions and are free of charge with registration. To register for any of the following classes, call (220) 564-3388 or go to <https://www.lmhealth.org/Community/Classes-Events>.

- **Stork Tours** – available for women and their partner to tour LMH’s state-of-the-art facilities, meet members of the physician team and learn more about maternity services offered at the Hospital.

- **Childbirth Education** – teaches mothers and their birth coach about breathing techniques, comfort measures, labor, delivery, and what to expect postpartum.
- **Prenatal Breastfeeding Basics** – expectant parents learn about the benefits of breastfeeding for mothers, babies and society.
- **Mother-baby Basics** – new mothers learn about infant growth and development, infant stimulation, newborn care, and infant and child safety.
- **Boot Camp for New Dads** – a men’s group for first-time dads to gain confidence in their fathering abilities. Expectant fathers will learn valuable content such as the needs of new mothers, childcare basics, and the role of fathers. Men complete Boot Camp for New Dads with greater confidence and preparation for fatherhood, and ready to be a team with their baby’s mother. The class is held simultaneously with the Saturday session of the Mother-baby Basics class and is led by Master Coach Fathers and veteran dads with babies.
- **Infant CPR** – for expecting parents, grandparent and caretakers.
- **Sibling Preparation** – prepares older children for their role in the family and what to expect when visiting mom and new baby.
- **Grandparenting** – expectant grandparents focus on changes in the best and safest practices for caring for newborns in recent years.

Preparation is key to a safe and healthy delivery. The LMH Maternal Child staff is available to answer questions and provide information to help each mother create a birthing experience that meets her every need and ensure that she receives the highest quality care.



Quality Reporting to the Community

Patient Story and Benchmarks for Maternity Care

Patient Story – Hannah Pellett

As a nurse, Hannah Pellett believes it is important to be informed and actively participate in one's own health care. Doing research and having an understanding of health concerns is vital to taking control of personal wellbeing, which she did during her first pregnancy. She read all she could about the birthing process to find the latest information and techniques utilized in Canada and many European countries that lead to a better maternal and infant experience. She and her husband, Tom, felt giving birth at a hospital would not be beneficial because some common birthing practices can increase the odds of cesarean section and the need for an epidural. The couple opted to contact a midwife team to assist in a home water birth – the process of giving birth in a tub of warm water.

When Hannah went into labor with her first baby, everything was going as planned, until the midwives became concerned that the baby was having heart rate decelerations and felt moving to the hospital for constant fetal monitoring would be prudent. Hannah was rushed to a hospital outside of Licking County where her son's birth was treated as an emergency. Without being asked what she wanted, Hannah was instructed to lie on her back and given an episiotomy as staff members yelled at her to push. "It was a very stressful event and I felt I had no control over what was happening to me," Hannah said. Her son, Tetton – now 4 years old, was delivered safely and perfectly healthy within 20 minutes of arriving at the hospital. However, Hannah felt the traumatic process left her feeling rundown, and she was slow to recover.

Just a few years later, Tom, also a nurse, accepted a position at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH). The couple now was expecting their second child. They heard about the Baby Expo at LMH, an event presented by the LMH Development Council featuring Maternal Child staff and area businesses, offering an opportunity for attendees to learn more about local baby/maternity products and services. At the event, which is now known as Preparing for Baby – a Resource Fair, Tom and Hannah had the opportunity to tour the Maternity area on the LMH Third Floor. The couple viewed the technology used during the birthing process including a wireless monitor that allows the mother to move around the room and up and down the hallways, and

the specially-designed, fully adjustable beds that allow multiple positions for maximum comfort during and after delivery. The bed includes a bar that facilitates a squatting position.

In addition to the tour, Hannah discovered that LMH has certified nurse midwives on staff. "I made an appointment to see Loretta Long, APRN-CNM. She was open to doing things differently and giving me the opportunity to kneel when delivering my baby." When Hannah labored with Tetton, she discovered she was most comfortable when kneeling. "Lying on your back compresses the pelvis, so I did not want to deliver like that again," Hannah said. Hannah also wanted Tom to be involved in the actual delivery. "Loretta was supportive and I felt so comfortable with her."

When Hannah went into labor, she and Tom were taken to their private birthing suite at LMH and were given the freedom to experience the process as they had planned. Hannah was allowed to wear clothing in which she felt comfortable. The Maternal Child nurses connected the wireless monitor, placing it under Hannah's tank top out of the way. They offered water and other comfort items as needed. Lauren Baker, D.O., was the attending physician who monitored Hannah's labor. Hannah's birth preferences and goals were discussed and a low-intervention approach to her care was provided. Family members also were welcomed inside the room to offer support to Hannah and Tom. "My mother, who is an obstetrics nurse, and my sister-in-law, who is a nurse at LMH, were in the room with us. My mother was very impressed with the wireless monitor, she had never seen anything like it." As labor progressed, Hannah began to waiver in her decision not to have an epidural, but after gentle encouragements and assistance in staying focused from her care team, she ultimately decided to labor without it.

When the time came to deliver the baby, Dr. Baker encouraged Hannah to deliver in the position she felt most comfortable. Dr. Baker guided Tom's hands and instructed him on how to gently bring the baby out. "Tom essentially delivered the baby, then placed our son, Ogden, on my chest. It was such a different experience than our first son," Hannah said. "Dr. Baker was so calm and gentle." Hannah also asked the staff about delayed cord clamping – a prolongation of the time between the delivery of the newborn and the clamping of the umbilical cord. Leaving the umbilical cord intact for a few minutes allows

more blood to transfer from the placenta to the baby, sometimes increasing the child's blood volume by up to a third. The iron in the blood increases the newborn's iron storage, which is vital for healthy brain development. Hannah and Tom learned that delayed cord clamping is performed routinely for all patients at LMH due to these proven benefits, and Tom was given the honor of cutting the cord.

After giving birth to Ogden, Hannah and Tom were offered plenty of "snuggle time" to bond with him. LMH encourages Kangaroo Care, a method of skin-to-skin contact that both mother and father can participate in during the baby's hospital stay. Skin-to-skin contact assists in keeping the baby's heart rate steady, breathing regular and reduces pain. The staff provides support and the one-on-one education including assistance from a certified lactation consultant. "It was so nice to be taken care of and have the opportunity to ask questions and receive assistance in breastfeeding. The best gift, though, was the gourmet meal. It was so delicious and nourishing," said Hannah. LMH offers new parents a chef-prepared gourmet dinner for two served by candlelight to allow them to celebrate in the privacy of their room. "The entire experience, from arrival to discharge, was a stark difference than my first delivery, instead of begging to be released, this time we did not want to leave," Hannah said.

LMH earned Baby-Friendly designation in 2016 through Baby-Friendly USA, Inc. – the gold standard in care, which encourages and recognizes hospitals and birthing centers that offer an optimal level of care for breastfeeding mothers and their babies. The criteria are challenging, designed to set the standards for the best possible breastfeeding support for mother and infant in the maternity setting. LMH was the first community hospital in Central Ohio to earn the designation.

Licking Memorial Women's Health has five OB/GYN physicians and two certified nurse midwives. The midwives care for low-risk women while the physicians additionally specialize in high-risk pregnancy care. All of LMH's obstetric providers are dedicated to helping women meet their goals for labor and birth by using evidence-based birth techniques that require minimal interventions and have high rates of patient satisfaction.

Maternity Care – How do we compare?

At Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS), we take pride in the care we provide. To monitor the quality of that care, we track specific quality measures and compare to benchmark measures. Then, we publish the information so you can draw your own conclusions regarding your healthcare choices.

- According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, small-for-gestational-age infants are those who are born weighing less than the 10th percentile for their given gestational age. At term, this weight is 2,500 grams (5 pounds, 8 ounces). Many factors contribute to low birth weight, including lack of prenatal care, a mother's poor nutritional status before and during pregnancy, and drug, tobacco or alcohol use during pregnancy. Low birth-weight infants are at increased risk for health problems. Adequate prenatal care and healthy practices can significantly reduce the incidence of low birth-weight deliveries. **In 2019, there were 990 babies delivered at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) – 53 of those babies weighed less than 2,500 grams.**

	LMH 2017	LMH 2018	LMH 2019	National ⁽¹⁾
Low birth-weight infants	5.4%	5.3%	5.3%	8.0%

- Smoking during pregnancy is an important modifiable risk factor associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes.⁽²⁾ It is associated with 5 percent of infant deaths, 10 percent of pre-term births, and 30 percent of small-for-gestational-age infants.⁽³⁾ Because pregnancy smoking rates in Licking County are higher than the national rate, Licking Memorial Women's Health providers have increased their efforts to assess patients' active smoking during pregnancy at each office visit, counsel patients to quit smoking, and refer each pregnant smoker to LMH's free "Quit for You, Quit for Your Baby" tobacco cessation program. **During 2019, 28 percent of patients reported smoking during pregnancy and were referred to the program. The below measure reflects the statistical improvement at the time of delivery.**

	LMH 2017	LMH 2018	LMH 2019	National ⁽²⁾
Patients who reported smoking during pregnancy	32%	31%	28%	12.3%
Patients who reported smoking on admission for delivery	N/A	23%	19%	State Average ⁽³⁾ 14.1%

- Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended as the optimal nutrition for infants for the first six months of life, with continued breastfeeding after the introduction of solid foods for the first year or longer, if desired. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), ACOG, World Health Organization and other healthcare organizations support this recommendation recognizing the significant lifelong health benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and child. The AAP recommends breastfeeding should be initiated within one hour of the infant's birth and recommends against routine supplementation of newborn infants with formula or glucose water unless medically indicated. LMH provides prenatal education as well as support and assistance during the postpartum period to help mothers achieve their goals for successful breastfeeding.

	LMH 2017	LMH 2018	LMH 2019	LMH Goal ⁽⁵⁾
Breastfeeding rate upon discharge	61.9%	57.5%	59%	greater than 55%
Breastfed infants receiving exclusive breast milk prior to discharge	76%	70%	81%	National ⁽⁶⁾ 54%

- Cesarean section deliveries (C-sections) should be performed only when necessary. Lower percentages are preferable.

	LMH 2017	LMH 2018	LMH 2019	National ⁽⁶⁾
First-time C-sections	13%	15%	14%	15%

- Elective deliveries are scheduled in advance rather than occurring naturally, either through induction or C-section. Studies have shown that elective inductions performed before 39 weeks' gestation have higher rates of newborn complications, higher C-section rates, and longer hospitalization for mothers.

	LMH 2017	LMH 2018	LMH 2019	National ⁽⁴⁾
Elective deliveries performed before 39 weeks	0%	0%	0%	2%

Maternity Care – How do we compare? (continued on back)



Check out our Quality Report Cards online at www.LMHealth.org.

6. Group B streptococci (GBS), which emerged in the U.S. in the 1970s, is an infection that is associated with illness and death among newborns. Most neonatal GBS infections can be prevented through screenings and, if needed, by giving an antibiotic to the mother before delivery.

	LMH 2017	LMH 2018	LMH 2019	LMH Goal
Mothers with GBS receiving antibiotic within 4 hours prior to delivery	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of newborns testing positive with GBS	0	0	0	0

***Beginning in 2016, mothers who delivered within four hours of arrival at LMH are excluded from this measure.**

7. Gestational diabetes (GDM) is one of the most common clinical issues during pregnancy. The prevalence of GDM ranges from 2 to 5 percent of all pregnancies in the U.S., and all expectant patients should be screened between 24 and 28 weeks' gestation. Licking Memorial Health Professionals (LMHP) obstetricians screen pregnant patients for GDM by 29 weeks.

	LMHP 2017	LMHP 2018	LMHP 2019	LMH Goal
LMHP pregnant patients screened for GDM by 29 weeks	96%	93%	93%	greater than 90%

Data Footnotes:

- (1) Preliminary data for 2013. *National Vital Statistics Reports, 63(2)*. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr63/nvsr63_02.pdf
- (2) Tong, VT, Dietz, PM, et al. *Trends in Smoking Before, During and After Pregnancy – Pregnancy Risks Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), United States, 40 sites, 2000-2010.*
- (3) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5226303/>
- (4) *HospitalCompare.hhs.gov Comparative Database.*
- (5) *Breastfeeding Report Card, United States / 2013, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.* Available at www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/2013BreastfeedingReportCard.pdf.
- (6) *MIDAS+ CPMS Comparative Database*

Health Tips – Maternity

It is important for expectant mothers to gain an appropriate amount of weight during their pregnancy to ensure a healthy delivery. Gaining too much or too little weight during pregnancy can result in serious health problems for mother and baby. Regular exercise and a nutritious diet can support healthy weight gain throughout pregnancy and ensure the proper growth and development of the baby.

Eating nutrient-rich foods during pregnancy is critical to the baby's growth and development. Fruits and vegetables contain important nutrients such as vitamin C and folic acid. Breads and whole grains are a key source of iron, B vitamins and fiber. Meat, fish, eggs and beans provide protein, B vitamins and iron. Dairy products such as milk, cheese and yogurt contain calcium which is essential for building strong bones and teeth. Taking prenatal vitamins that are high in folic acid, iron and omega-3 fatty

acids can contribute to the baby's growth and development. Folic acid can help prevent neural tube defects, while omega-3 fatty acids support the baby's brain development.

Physical activity is important for maternal health. Staying active while pregnant can help women increase energy, decrease discomfort and reduce the risk of complications during pregnancy. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology recommends that pregnant women get 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity each day. Exercises such as swimming, brisk walking and indoor stationary cycling are low-risk activities that benefit the woman's body and can be done up until labor begins. Incorporating strength training and yoga into the routine can help with overall muscle tone. Kegel exercises can help strengthen a woman's pelvic area and help her control those muscles during labor and delivery. Pregnant women considering

any kind of exercise regimen should discuss a plan with their physician.

Approximately 8 percent of all pregnancies involve complications that could harm the mother or baby if left untreated. A woman should tell her physician right away if she experiences the following symptoms:

- Bleeding or cramping
- Severe nausea and vomiting
- Significant decrease in baby's activity
- Severe or long lasting headaches
- Dizziness
- Continuing weight loss
- Leg pain or swelling

Most pregnancies progress without any problems. Regular prenatal care, a healthy diet, exercise and taking prenatal vitamins will benefit both mother and baby and ensure a healthy pregnancy and delivery.



Licking Memorial Health Systems

1320 West Main Street • Newark, Ohio 43055
(220) 564-4000 • www.LMHealth.org

Please take a few minutes to read this month's report on **Maternity Care**. You'll soon discover why Licking Memorial Hospital is measurably different ... for your health!

The Quality Report Card is a publication of the LMHS Public Relations Department. Please contact the Public Relations Department at (220) 564-1572 to receive future mailings.

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