

# Quality Report Card



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MATERNITY CARE

## LMH Offers **CenteringPregnancy Program** for Expecting Mothers

Pregnancy can evoke a wide range of emotions and concerns. Excitement and joy are common feelings, but there can also be anxiety about the many life changes that are about to occur. It is natural to be concerned about the baby's health, adjustment to parenthood, and other demands of raising a child. Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) offers the CenteringPregnancy Program to provide assistance from pregnancy through postpartum for expectant mothers.

CenteringPregnancy is prenatal care that includes a traditional health checkup with additional time and attention in a group setting. Participants meet with their provider and other women with similar due dates for eight sessions during their pregnancy. The program offers expecting mothers an enhanced care experience by spending more time with their healthcare provider and the opportunity to share learning and experiences with other pregnant women. Studies show that mothers who participate in the CenteringPregnancy Program experience reduced rates of preterm birth and low birth weight babies, lower rates of gestational diabetes, increased breastfeeding rates, and reduced instances of postpartum depression.

Women are offered the opportunity to participate in the CenteringPregnancy program during their initial prenatal appointment with an LMH Perinatal Nurse Navigator (PNN). A PNN is a specialized,

registered nurse who guides, educates, and supports expectant families from pregnancy through postpartum. They function as a central point of contact to coordinate care, remove barriers to access, and connect families with resources such as social services, specialists, and breastfeeding support. This relationship helps patients achieve healthy outcomes in pregnancy and in the infant's first year of life.

The program groups six to eight women with similar due dates to participate in nurse-led meetings beginning around their 14th week of pregnancy. The group meets once a month for the first four meetings, then twice a month for the last four meetings to complete the program around their 36th week of pregnancy.

Each session bundles the prenatal appointment, prenatal education, and social support into a two-hour visit. In the first hour, each woman meets individually with a midwife who checks blood pressure, records their weight, and assesses the baby's growth. Individual concerns are also discussed. While waiting for their individual appointments, the group socializes, discusses concerns, and provides support to one another.

The second hour consists of prenatal education that focuses on all aspects of wellness during pregnancy. Topics for discussion include understanding pregnancy, nutrition, breastfeeding, stress

management, exercise, birth, newborn care, child safety, and new mothering issues. Guest speakers, such as LMH dietitians and lactation consultants, attend meetings to discuss their area of expertise and answer questions. The group also receives a tour of the Labor & Delivery Department to observe the facilities and learn more about the maternity services that LMH offers to patients.

In addition to the CenteringPregnancy Program, LMH offers a home visit to all mothers who live within 30 minutes of the Hospital, every breastfeeding mother, or a mother who is referred by a physician or nurse and may need a little assistance or reassurance after delivery. During the visit, a Perinatal Home Visiting Nurse will complete a blood pressure check, depression screening, and offer breastfeeding support. The nurse will also complete a newborn assessment, weight check, and answer general newborn questions.

LMH is committed to providing expectant mothers and their families with the education, resources, and social support necessary for a healthy pregnancy. By combining expert medical care with a supportive community, the CenteringPregnancy Program creates a unique opportunity for mothers to have an active role in their healthcare while ensuring the best health outcome for their newborn.

# Patient Story – Hanna Paul

After a summer wedding in 2024, Hanna Paul discovered she was pregnant that December. She, her husband, Joe, and their sons, Braxton and Carter, were excited to add another member to their family. In order to ensure the baby was healthy, Hanna began visiting Licking Memorial Women's Health for prenatal care. Just 18 weeks into her pregnancy, the staff at Women's Health discovered that Hanna's baby was smaller than expected. She was diagnosed with intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR), a serious condition in which the fetus fails to grow at a normal rate during pregnancy. There are a number of causes for the condition, but Hanna was told she was likely experiencing an issue with the development of the placenta due to restricted blood flow. It was recommended that she attend two appointments a week to monitor the baby's health.

Pregnancy surveillance of a fetus with IUGR is performed by ultrasounds assessing fetal growth, amniotic fluid, and blood flow in the fetus and umbilical cord. In the third trimester, generally after 30 weeks of pregnancy, additional surveillance of the fetus is often performed once or twice per week. The optimal timing of delivery is highly variable and depends on the underlying cause of IUGR and the status of the baby in the womb. After 27 weeks, Hanna was visiting the Women's Health offices three times a week.

"I got to know the employees at Women's Health very well since I was visiting all the time," Hanna said. "It was an unfortunate situation, but the nurses and staff members caring for me and my baby made me feel comfortable and safe. It was actually a pleasure to talk with them and know that they were invested in watching my baby develop and excited to see her progress."

At 37 weeks, an appointment was made to induce labor. Unfortunately, labor did not progress as hoped, and the physician was concerned about the baby. Cecelia

was delivered by cesarean section. She weighed three pounds, seven ounces. Due to her size and weight, she was taken to the Special Care Nursery where specially trained registered nurses are available to provide care, and pediatric provider coverage is available 24 hours, seven days a week.

"We are so blessed to have received the care we did. Things could have gone much differently," shared Hanna. "Everyone was so patient and helpful. I feel like we created a special bond and built relationships with the staff. I was so grateful to be allowed to stay with Cecelia in the nursery. They made sure that she and I had everything we needed. It was a very special time to see her grow and thrive. After two weeks, we took Cecelia home and she is my little rock star. She is growing and hitting her milestones as if she never needed special care."

During her pregnancy, Hanna participated in the CenteringPregnancy program hosted by Perinatal Nurse Navigators from Licking Memorial Hospital Maternity Services. CenteringPregnancy is prenatal care that includes a traditional health checkup with additional time and attention in a group setting. Participants meet with other women with similar due dates for eight sessions and have

the opportunity to share learning and experiences with others. The Perinatal Nurse Navigators are specially trained to assist mothers throughout pregnancy with health information and to find needed resources.

"I loved having other moms to talk with about my experiences," Hanna explained. "Pregnancy is hard, and sometimes you feel as though no one understands the changes happening in your body. Talking with others who are experiencing the same changes is wonderful. Sharing makes things easier, and knowing that my personal experience is not strange or unusual was very helpful. One of the other mothers from my group actually gave birth on the same day as I did, so now Cecelia has a birth buddy. We hope to maintain the connection we made during the program and are excited to watch our children grow."

Hanna is also grateful for her parents and friends who provided support during the pregnancy. Her mother assists in caring for Cecelia now. Joe and the boys are very excited to have a little girl to care for as well. They are all thankful for the care provided by the staff at Women's Health and Maternal Child.



# 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.

1. 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 2025, there were 693 babies delivered at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH), a small percentage of which met low birth-weight criteria.**

	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH 2025	National <sup>(1)</sup>
Low birth-weight infants	6.9%	4.9%	6.2%	8.58%

2. Smoking or vaping during pregnancy is an important modifiable risk factor associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes. Because pregnancy smoking rates in Licking County are higher than the national rate, Licking Memorial Women’s Health has increased 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 2025, 25 percent of patients reported smoking at some point during pregnancy. The below measure reflects the statistical improvement at the time of delivery.**

	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH 2025	LMH Goal
Patients who reported smoking or vaping at any time during pregnancy	16%	21%	25%	Less than 25%
Patients who reported smoking or vaping on admission for delivery	12%	14%	16%	Less than 20%
Number of referrals to “Quit for You, Quit for Your Baby” program	339	305	247	N/A
Percent of pregnant women who completed the initial consultation	80%	80%	83%	More than 80%
Percent of pregnant women who received counseling after their initial consultation	27%	28%	20%	25%

3. 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 that 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 2023	LMH 2024	LMH 2025	LMH Goal
Breastfeeding rate upon discharge	66.4%	63.4%	67.5%	greater than 55%
Breastfed infants receiving exclusive breast milk prior to discharge	72%	64%	74%	National <sup>(2)</sup> 56%

4. A Cesarean section delivery (C-section) may be necessary in the event of delivery complications and is a decision based on careful consideration by the physician. Due to the additional risks of such a procedure, C-sections should be performed only when medically necessary. Lower percentages are preferable.

	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH 2025	National <sup>(2)</sup>
First-time C-sections	12%	14%	12%	16%

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

Check out our Quality Report Cards online at [LMHealth.org](https://www.lmhealth.org).

**5.** Elective deliveries are newborn deliveries that are scheduled in advance, rather than allowing labor to occur naturally, specifically for mothers prior to 39 weeks of gestation. Studies have shown that elective deliveries performed prior to 39 weeks have higher rates of newborn complications, higher C-section rates, and longer hospitalization for mothers. Lower elective delivery rates are better, as this reduces potential risks to the baby and the mother.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	National <sup>(3)</sup>
Elective deliveries performed before 39 weeks	0%	0%	0%	3%

**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 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	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

**Data Footnotes:**

- (1) Births: Final Data for 2023. National Vital Statistics Reports, 74(1). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr74/nvsr74-1.pdf>
- (2) MIDAS+ CPMS Comparative Database
- (3) HospitalCompare.hhs.gov Comparative Database

# Hepatitis B Vaccine for Newborns

In December 2025, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) adopted recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to move to individual-based decision-making that allows parents to decide when and if to vaccinate their infants against hepatitis B if the mother tests negative for the virus. Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) continues to follow guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), which recommends that the hepatitis B vaccine be administered to newborns at birth, within 24 hours of delivery.

Recognizing that new federal recommendations for the hepatitis B vaccine may lead to questions about whether parents should vaccinate their infant at birth, LMH aims to provide families with clear, transparent information

so that parents feel confident in making informed healthcare decisions for their newborn.

Hepatitis B is a viral infection that causes inflammation in the liver and is the leading cause of liver cancer worldwide. An individual can contract the virus by being exposed to infected bodily fluids, such as blood, semen, or vaginal fluids. Mothers can unknowingly pass the hepatitis B virus to their babies at birth. The virus can also be transmitted through close contact, such as minor cuts or microscopic amounts of blood on a shared surface, to an infant by an infected caregiver or family member. Newborns and infants are particularly susceptible to hepatitis B and more likely to develop chronic infection that can lead to liver disease and liver failure.

The AAP recommends testing and vaccination of hepatitis B for all family members and caregivers of the infant. The hepatitis B vaccine is proven to be extremely safe and is delivered as a 3 to 4 dose series. Most children receive the first dose at birth, and the series is completed by 18 months of age. When given at birth, the hepatitis B vaccine is up to 90 percent effective in preventing infection in infants.

Although the new CDC guidelines offer flexibility, LMH supports the AAP's recommendation for administering the hepatitis B vaccine to newborns within the first 24 hours of birth. Parents are encouraged to consult with their obstetrician and pediatrician to make informed decisions for their newborn's health.



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

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