

**WELLSTAR<sup>®</sup>**



**Atlanta  
Medical Center**

# **Water Birth Online Course**

**Women's Services**

# Water Birth



# Instructions for Online Class

1. Read through all the slides.
2. Print out the certificate at the end of the slides.
3. Sign and date the certificate.
4. Bring the completed certificate with you when you come to the hospital in labor.

*You must have your completed certificate with your signature and date of class as confirmation to be able to labor and deliver in the water.*

# Our Goal

- Positive outcome for you and your baby

# Possible Benefits for Mom

- Warmth, comfort and support during labor
- Ease of movement
- May provide more effective labor
- Increased relaxation
- Early bonding
- Natural effleurage
- Supports tissues of the perineum

# Possible Benefits for Mom

- May provide some pain relief in labor and birth
- Reduces sensory stimulation
- Enhanced delivery experience

# Possible Benefits for Baby

- A more natural transition
- Immediate bonding with parents
- Warm, familiar environment
- Often times a less traumatic birth
- Less light

# Water Birth Facts

- According to the *American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on the Fetus and Newborn* (2005), the safety and efficacy of underwater birth for the newborn has not been established.
- Hydrotherapy has more supportive evidenced based research than actual water births



# Disadvantages and Risks

- Challenges with monitoring fetal well being and labor progression
- Difficult for support person to give counter-pressure
- Risk of fetal aspiration (baby breathing in water)
- Risk of infection
- Increased risk of hypothermia for the baby
- Slippery baby
- Possible delays in assessing and interceding with intrapartum complications

# WAMC Water Birth Eligibility

- Approval from your Healthcare Provider on staff at WellStar AMC
- Meets hospital screening criteria
- Attends water birth class. Produces verified Water Birth
- Class Certificate upon presenting to Labor and Delivery
- Signs Water Birth Consent upon admission to Labor & Delivery

# WAMC Water Birth Policy

- All water birth deliveries will be attended by a physician or certified nurse midwife on staff at WellStar AMC. If the provider is unavailable, the patient will be able to receive the benefits of laboring in the water but will not be able to deliver in the water.
- All patients choosing a water birth delivery will be attended by a responsible adult at all times while in the water.

# WAMC Water Birth Policy

- No interventional procedures (i.e. episiotomy, vacuum extraction, forceps, etc.) will be allowed in the birthing pool/tub.
- Children are not allowed in the water.
- Water birth policy will be determined by healthcare professionals on staff at AMC.

# WAMC Water Birth Policy

- Doulas are not medical professionals; thus, the opinion of the doula will not determine medical status, intervention, or water birth eligibility.
- Patient agrees to follow instructions from the certified nurse midwife, physician, and/or L&D nurse, including exiting the water if asked or not entering water until instructed to do so.

# WAMC Water Birth Policy

- Patients are allowed to have three people in the L&D room in addition to themselves. All visitors will be asked to wait in the designated waiting areas (i.e. Labor and Delivery waiting room or waiting area outside of the cafeteria).
- Patient support system will be asked to follow WellStar Atlanta Medical Center's Visitation Policy.

# WAMC Water Birth Policy

- Maternal and fetal vital signs will be monitored intermittently. Telemetry or wireless monitoring is required with conditions that require fetal monitoring.

# WAMC Water Birth Policy

- All patients choosing a water birth delivery will be monitored for at least 30 minutes and must have a Category 1 FHR tracing to be eligible to enter the tub.



# WAMC Water Birth Policy

- If meconium is present: Patient must be monitored for 30 minutes and have a Category 1 Fetal Heart Rate tracing to be eligible to labor in the tub. Patient may have intermittent Fetal Monitoring while in tub per ACOG guidelines.

# WAMC Water Birth Policy

- Water birth will be determined by priority established by healthcare professional. It is understood that patient flexibility will be present in order to meet the needs of as many patients as possible.
- Patient has no contraindications for a water birth delivery.

# Contraindications

- Untreated communicable blood or skin infection
- Infection, maternal fever greater than 100.4
- Active genital herpes, HIV, Hepatitis B antigen, or positive
- Hepatitis C antibody
- Open Wound
- No bleeding greater than bloody show/excessive bleeding

# Contraindications

- Category II or III fetal heart rate tracing
- Less than 37 weeks gestation, multiple pregnancy or any high-risk condition
- Any sign of fetal distress
- Malpresentation – baby must be head first

# Contraindications

- Pitocin administration while in tub
- Not in active, progressive labor
- Use of various medications 15 minutes – 4 hours prior to entering the water (time varies depending on medication)
- Epidural

# Contraindications

- Preeclampsia
- Any condition which requires continuous fetal heart rate monitoring when continuous fetal monitoring is unavailable
- Mobility/skeletal disease

# Contraindications

- Prolonged labor according to ACOG guidelines
- History of shoulder dystocia
- Intra-uterine growth restriction
- Body Mass Index (BMI) > 40: BMI will be calculated by providers prenatally to determine candidacy for water birth
- Any other condition at the discretion of the nurse midwife or physician

# Suggested Additional Supplies to Bring

- Bikini/halter top
- Change of clothes for support person
- Small float/swim rings that can be used as a seat cushion, back rest (bath pillow), or for additional support.



# Strategies that might be used in the tub

- Use cool wash cloths if you're feeling too warm in the tub
- Use a variety of positions to help the baby descend and rotate
- You may not be in the tub the entire time: Alternate between tub, walking, side lying, rocking and/or other comfort measures
- If contractions stop, get out of tub and walk

# What to Expect

- Kind, courteous, caring staff
- Support in achieving your birth plan
- Attentive staff that is monitoring you and the baby
- Nurses working closely with your provider



# What to Expect

- Floating organic material will be removed by fish net. If water is too contaminated, tub will be emptied and refilled
- Ring of Fire when baby crowns – bottom may feel like it is “on fire” – this is normal
- Baby is brought to the surface immediately
- You will be asked to hold your baby so the face is out of the water. We want your baby to stay warm! We will ask you to keep the rest of your baby in the warm water

# What to Expect

- If there is any indication that your baby needs assistance, he/she will be given to medical staff immediately for evaluation and assistance
- You may deliver the placenta in or out of the tub. If greater than 20 minutes from delivery of infant, you will be assisted from the tub for delivery of the placenta

# What to Expect

- To ensure a thorough examination and assessment of your perineum, you will be asked to leave the tub within approximately 20 minutes of delivery
- Your baby will be dried and wrapped in warm blankets and given to birth partner. You will be assisted from the tub, dried with warm blankets, and assisted to the bed

# Routine treatments for infants recommended by the AAP

- Eye antibiotic ointment
- Vitamin K injection
- Hepatitis B vaccine
- Hearing Screen
- Metabolic Screening

# Questions

- Call 404-265-4745 or your health care provider with any questions you may have.

# Certificate of Completion

I have read and agree to the eligibility requirements, WellStar AMC's Water Birth Policy and contraindications for water birth at WellStar Atlanta Medical Center.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmation #: AMC-54786





Good Luck

YOU CAN DO IT!!