

Choosing where to give birth is one of the biggest decisions you'll need to make. Our checklist helps put you in charge. To weigh up your options, tick the boxes next to the points that matter most to you. Or you could mark each point on a scale of one to five, and then tally up the totals at the bottom.

Having your baby at home

On the one hand...

- Giving birth at home is thought to be as safe as giving birth at a hospital.
- You will have one-to-one care from your midwife. In some areas, you may have the same midwife during labour and in pregnancy.
- You can use your own bathroom.
- You are less likely to need pain relief, and your midwife may bring gas and air.
- You can relax in your bath or shower. You are guaranteed an available pool if you want a water birth.
- You and your partner can eat what you like, when you like.
- You are more likely to have a vaginal birth. Interventions are more likely in hospital.
- You and your partner can curl up with your new baby in the comfort of your own bed.

Total

On the other hand...

- You will not have access to senior specialists such as obstetricians and gynecologists.
- 40 per cent of first-time moms and 10 per cent of second-time moms who planned a home birth transfer to a hospital, usually because they are exhausted or they want an epidural.
- You may worry about noise, (which could be in the early hours) disturbing your neighbours.
- You will need to arrange in advance if you want gas and air as a pain reliever.
- You will have to go to the trouble and expense of renting or buying a birth pool if you want a water birth at home.
- If you want strong pain relief, such as an epidural, you will have to go to hospital.
- Giving birth is usually a messy business. You will need to protect your furniture or carpets.
- You will need to call your midwife if you need help with breastfeeding or any other concerns.

Total