

Chapter 2: So Many Choices

Learn more about your maternity care choices:

- <http://www.childbirthconnection.org>
- *The Great Starts Guide* at https://www.parenttrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/GSGuide_2017.pdf
- *Deliver This! Make the Childbirth Choice That's Right for You... No Matter What Everyone Else Thinks* by Marisa Cohen (2007)

Find a Birth Center: <https://www.birthcenters.org/search/custom.asp?id=2926>

Find an Obstetrician: <http://www.acog.org/About-ACOG/Find-an-Ob-Gyn>

Learn More about Family Physicians: <https://familydoctor.org/choosing-a-family-doctor/>

Learn More about Midwifery: <http://cfmidwifery.org>

Find a Nurse-midwife: <https://www.midwife.org/find-a-midwife>

Find a Licensed Midwife or Certified Professional Midwife: There is not currently a national directory available. Search your local area.

Find a Childbirth Educator:

- https://member.icea.org/i4a/memberDirectory/index.cfm?directory_id=1&pageID=1
- <https://www.lamaze.org/lamaze-classes>
- <http://www.bradleybirth.com/Directory.aspx>
- <https://birthingfromwithin.com/directory/>
- <https://transitiontoparenthood.wordpress.com/for-parents/options-for-maternity-care/choose-birth-class/>

Find a Birth or Postpartum Doula:

- <http://www.dona.org>
- <http://www.doulamatch.net>

Find a Lactation Consultant: <https://ilca.org/why-ibclc-falc/>

World Health Organization's Baby-Friendly Award for Hospitals That Support Breastfeeding: <http://www.babyfriendlyusa.org>

Information about Doulas:

- *The Doula Book: How a Trained Labor Companion Can Help You Have a Shorter, Easier, and Healthier Birth* by Marshall H. Klaus and John H. Kennell(2012)
- *The Doula Guide to Birth: Secrets Every Pregnant Woman Should Know* by Ananda Lowe and Rachel Zimmerman (2009)
- <http://www.dona.org/what-is-a-doula/>

Find a Hospital: Ratings

You probably know the names of your local hospitals, and it's very easy to learn more about them by looking at their websites. Many expectant families just choose the hospital closest to their home, or the one with the best marketing department and the most appealing ads. But, did you know there's a huge range of policies, intervention rates, and consumer satisfaction between hospitals? For example, cesarean rates may range from 15 percent – 70 percent! Here are resources to learn more about your options.

- Consumer ratings: there are several sites where consumers can rate hospitals or caregivers, including general sites like yelp, local.yahoo.com and insidertips.com and health care specific sites like: www.ratedmds.com, www.vitals.com, and the physician ratings on www.healthgrades.com. These are subjective ratings, and just like when you're reading movie reviews on Rotten Tomatoes, or restaurant reviews on Yelp, be sure to take everything with a grain of salt. Remember that a) people have different preferences, b) often people who make the effort to fill out online reviews had an unusually wonderful or unusually awful experience so you may not see many moderate options, c) some reviewers are stunningly ill informed, and are writing reviews based on things like "when I drove by, it looked nice" or "I was born there, so it must be great."
- At www.leapfroggroup.org, ratings compare hospitals. However, their ratings are based on very limited criteria: percentage of babies delivered electively (for non medical reasons) before full-term, episiotomy rates, screening for jaundice, preventing blood clots in women with cesareans, and how many very low birth weight (VLBW) babies are cared for each year.
- US News & World Report ranks the top 50 neonatal intensive care units (<http://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals/pediatric-rankings/neonatal-care>). 83% of the score comes very specific criteria such as nurse staffing, ability to prevent infection, babies who received breastmilk, and number of patients served. 17% is based on a survey of physicians asking their opinion about the reputation of the hospital.
- <http://www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare/search.html> report results from patient surveys. Ratings compare hospitals based on how clearly staff communicated with patients, whether patients received help as soon as they wanted, whether staff explained medicines to the patient before giving it, whether the room was regularly cleaned and so on. This data also appears on www.hospitalscenter.com.
- At www.healthgrades.com, ratings on "maternity care" reflect cesarean rate, number of maternal complications and newborn mortality rate.