Welcome

Welcome to Women’s Birth & Wellness Center. WBWC was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 2003 and opened as Piedmont Women’s Health Center in 1996. We are a nurse-midwifery service and free-standing birth center, providing an alternative to hospital birth, as well as prenatal, postpartum, lactation, and well-woman care to women and families in a safe, comfortable setting. Care is provided by Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNMs), Family/Women’s Health Nurse Practitioners (NPs), and Registered Nurses (RNs). Our providers are able to make referrals for particular problems to specialists in the community, if needed.

Client Satisfaction

It is our goal to provide you the highest standard of care and meet any possible needs regarding your healthcare. If at anytime you are dissatisfied with your care or the service provided by any WBWC employee, please notify the Executive Director immediately. Our staff is always available to address any concerns or complaints you may have.

We welcome all comments that you or your family offer regarding your experience at WBWC. You will receive a client satisfaction survey at your six-week postpartum visit. Please complete this survey, either as a paper form or online, to help us continue to improve our patient care.
APPOINTMENTS

CLINIC HOURS
Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m

Appointments are scheduled Monday through Friday during clinic hours. Midwives and nurses are on call 24 hours a day for laboring women or other concerns that need immediate attention. Non-emergency situations or questions will be addressed as soon as possible. You may leave a message on the nurse voice mail or the front desk staff can take a message. The nurse or midwife will call you back later that day or the next.

The clinic is closed occasionally during mid-day for meetings. In that case, and at all other times when the clinic is closed, our answering service will answer calls.

*If you cannot get through to our main phone number, 919-933-3301, in the event of emergency, inclement weather, or phone system failure, you may call the answering service directly at 866-276-0483. They will contact the midwife on call.*

LATE POLICY

The staff of Women’s Birth & Wellness Center values the time scheduled with you and wants to provide you with the best care possible. When you are late for your appointment, it affects the quality time that we want all of our clients to receive. We ask you to call us if you will be late, with the understanding that if you are ten minutes late for a thirty minute appointment or twenty minutes late for an hour appointment, you will be offered the option to reschedule. However, if you choose to be seen as a late arrival, your visit will be shortened, enabling the provider to stay on schedule for the rest of the day.

If you are a client who is being seen weekly or must be seen by a specific provider for follow-up care, rescheduling may not be an option. Should that happen, the provider will try to work you in the best that she can, which may require some wait time on your part.

We appreciate your understanding and communication so that we can provide you with quality care. We also appreciate your effort to be on time for your appointment.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

The birth center files maternity care claims with most insurance companies, including North Carolina Medicaid. It is extremely important for you to call and speak with your insurance representative about your maternity benefits so that you understand what coverage you have. Please use the insurance work sheet that you got at the Orientation Tour to help you understand your benefits and coverage. **Any balance not covered by your insurance is your responsibility.** Payment in cash, check, VISA or MasterCard is accepted.

You will receive an Estimated Out of Pocket Expenses letter via e-mail from our billing service, Midwife’s Billing Service, Inc. (MBSI), by your second visit. We offer payment plans for the amounts not covered by your insurance company or if you have no maternity benefits and are not eligible for Medicaid. Any need for special arrangements must be handled by the Business Director. For billing questions, please call MBSI at 800-874-2540.
What Is A Nurse-Midwife?

A Certified Nurse-Midwife (CNM) is educated in the two professions of nursing and midwifery. Completion of a nursing program and state licensure as a registered nurse (RN) are pre-requisites for entrance into a university affiliated nurse-midwifery program. There are more than 40 such programs throughout the United States today. A CNM in North Carolina has received national certification by the American Midwifery Certification Board and is licensed by the State Board of Nursing. All the nurse-midwives on staff at WBWC have the appropriate credentials to practice midwifery, are certified in Neonatal Resuscitation and CPR, and meet continuing education requirements of their profession. All providers are covered with malpractice insurance.

Nurse-midwives care for women during pregnancy, labor and birth. Care is also provided for newborns and mothers following birth. Well-woman gynecology is another aspect of nurse-midwifery practice that we are happy to offer at the birth center.

Nurse-midwives work in a collaborative relationship with physicians and other health care providers. Medical consultation and assistance is always available at UNC Hospitals should it be required.

How Is A Birth Center Different From A Hospital?

The Birth Center is a safe, comfortable, homelike setting where low-risk, healthy women are offered choices in the manner in which they give birth. The staff encourages family participation and women themselves choose who will share in their birth experience. We believe that education is an integral and essential part of a satisfying pregnancy and birth experience; it allows women to make informed choices throughout the process. Laboring women will be continually assessed and monitored by the nurse-midwife and the RN to assure both mother and baby are doing well.

Mothers are encouraged to eat, drink and move around in order to be as comfortable as possible during the labor and birth. Three of the four private birthing rooms contain a bathtub where mothers can spend time in the warm water to help them relax. Careful follow-up is provided after discharge from the center via telephone, home visits and office visits. These are only some of the special attributes of the midwifery/birth center model of care.

How Is The Birth Center Accredited?

Women’s Birth and Wellness Center is accredited by the Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers, using the standards of the American Association of Birth Centers (AABC, www.birthcenters.org). Accreditation is a voluntary procedure and is based on carefully defined national standards. This accreditation process occurs every 3 years. For more information, see www.birthcenteraccreditation.org.
Who Can Give Birth In A Birth Center?

Any woman who expects a normal pregnancy and birth can use a Birth Center for prenatal, labor and delivery, and postpartum care.

This includes women with:
- Rh negative blood
- First pregnancy at age 35 or older
- History of miscarriage
- Medical conditions that do not affect pregnancy
- History of controlled gestational diabetes in a previous pregnancy
- Desire to transfer when receiving prenatal care elsewhere
- Full term pregnancy, at least the 37th week of gestation

Who Cannot Use A Birth Center?

Women with certain conditions may need the extra support of the hospital environment for birth, but may still receive prenatal and postpartum care at a birth center.

This includes women with:
- Previous Cesarean birth (only former WBWC clients)
- Breech at term
- Labor occurring before 37 weeks or after 42 weeks of pregnancy, if risk criteria are met

Other women may have conditions that require high risk prenatal care, as well as hospital birth, and “risk out” of birth center care.

This includes, but is not limited to, women with:
- Chronic high blood pressure or a cardiac condition
- Excessive tobacco use
- Clinically significant malnutrition or obesity
- Multiple gestation (twins)
- Diabetes requiring oral medication or insulin
- In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF) pregnancy
- Very high or very low BMI

Each client’s medical history will be reviewed individually by the nurse-midwives.

Women Interested In Home Birth

WBWC midwives do not participate in home births, nor can we provide prenatal care to women who are planning home births. If, at some time during prenatal care here, you decide to have a home birth, be sure to inform us so that we can transfer your care to the provider of your choice.
What Complications Can Be Handled In A Birth Center?

Nurse-midwives are prepared to handle the following complications:

- Post-partum hemorrhage/excessive bleeding that can be controlled with the use of medication. If necessary an IV can be started to replace fluids. The mother can be transferred to the hospital by ambulance, if necessary.
- Infant resuscitation. A nurse-midwife and RN, certified in Neonatal Resuscitation, will be present at every birth. The training includes resuscitation, suction, and intubation to establish an airway. The Birth Center is equipped with suction, oxygen, laryngoscopes, and ambu-bags. The infant can be transferred to the hospital by ambulance, if necessary.
- Perineal tears. Nurse-midwives are trained to repair tears and episiotomies using a local anesthetic.

What Cannot Be Done In The Birth Center?

If any of the following are needed, a transfer from the Birth Center to the hospital is required. The situation causing the transfer determines whether the nurse-midwife will deliver you at the hospital or whether Family Medicine or OB/GYN physicians will become involved for the delivery.

- Anesthesia. Epidural anesthesia is not available at the Birth Center. Pain medications in labor are used sparingly because they can cause respiratory depression in the newborn. Coaching, support, and hydrotherapy are used routinely. Labor and birth are hard work. It is our goal to help women and their families make labor a positive experience for everyone.
- Vacuum, Forceps or Cesarean Birth. These procedures are done by our consulting physicians in the hospital, when medically necessary.
- Pitocin Induction or Augmentation. Because this requires the use of continuous electronic fetal monitoring (EFM) and immediate access to surgery should it be indicated, delivery is done at the hospital, often by the nurse-midwife.
- Fetal Monitoring. If there is a need for continuous EFM, a transfer is required and care is often continued by the nurse-midwife.

Is A Birth Center Safe?

The National Birth Center Study II, conducted by the American Association of Birth Centers (AABC) and published in the January/February 2013 issue of the Journal of Midwifery & Women’s Health, highlights the benefits for women who seek care at midwife-led birth centers. Findings also reinforce longstanding evidence that midwife-led birth centers provide safe and effective health care for women during pregnancy, labor, and birth.

The study, which included more than 15,500 women who received care in 79 midwife-led birth centers in 33 US states from 2007 through 2010, found that fewer than one in sixteen (6 percent) of participants required a cesarean birth compared to nearly one in four (24 percent) similarly low-risk women cared for in a hospital setting. Expecting families who choose the birth center setting in the U.S. can expect high-quality, family-centered care. Less than 2% of women who choose the birth center setting will require an urgent transfer for either mother or newborn. The stillbirth and newborn death rates are comparable to rates seen in other low-risk populations. The information provided by the new National Birth Center Study II will help women and families make evidence-based, informed decisions about their babies’ births.
What Can I Expect During My Prenatal Care?

The most important part of prenatal care is taking care of yourself. By attending all your visits, eating a well-balanced diet, exercising appropriately, reading, asking questions, choosing a provider for your infant, attending prepared childbirth classes, and living a healthy lifestyle, you will be doing all you can to help assure a low-risk pregnancy and safe birth.

What If I Need To Be Transferred?

It is possible that during your prenatal care with us, you will need a physician’s care for medical reasons. The most common causes are twins, fetal problems, or maternal complications. Many of these complications require high-risk rather than low-risk prenatal care and thus a transfer out of the birth center. We can transfer you to our consulting physicians, UNC Family Medicine, or to UNC OB/GYN, or another practice of your choice.

Though a vast majority of our patients will proceed through their pregnancy and birth without complications, we do keep our back-up physicians informed of your progress in pregnancy, in the event a transfer is necessary. Very rarely are transfers to the hospital made on an emergency basis. However, in the event of an emergency in labor, Orange County Emergency Services ambulance will be called. The midwife will go to the hospital with you. Most transfers in labor are not emergencies and are made by car. Children must remain with their designated caregiver. Infants may occasionally be admitted to the hospital, usually for observation of respiratory problems. These transports are usually via ambulance. In the event of an emergency involving an infant, we have made arrangements with the highly trained Neonatal Transport Team from UNC (if available) to come for the transfer of the infant to the hospital, with Orange County Emergency Services as back-up.

WBWC certified nurse-midwives all have privileges at UNC Hospital. This means that when a transfer occurs that is non-emergent and the scope of care needed is within the parameters of midwifery care, the midwife will continue to manage your care, deliver your baby at the hospital, and plan your discharge from the hospital. If the care you or your baby needs is beyond the midwifery scope of care, our back-up physicians will assume care, but the midwife will remain with you. All of your postpartum care will continue the same as if you delivered at WBWC.

Preparation For A Healthy Birth

Childbirth Education Classes – We expect all our pregnant women and their partners or support people to be well informed about pregnancy and birth, and well prepared for the event. A list of childbirth educators is available from your midwife. Classes are required for all first time pregnant women and highly recommended for first time fathers-to-be. If for some reason you are unable to take childbirth education classes, you must make an alternative plan to prepare for your birth and review the plan with a midwife. Please do not wait until late in your pregnancy to sign up for classes or to make alternative preparation plans. Call instructors early in your pregnancy. There are many classes in our communities and the choice is left up to you.

Infant Car Seat – North Carolina has child safety seat laws. Please purchase, rent or borrow one by your 36th week of pregnancy and practice using it. Install it in your car so you know it can be adjusted properly. We will not discharge your infant from the birth center to go home without a car seat.
Infant CPR – Classes are available through the American Red Cross (www.redcross.org) in your community, as online education without certification or a class or combination of online and class for certification. WBWC occasionally offers Infant First Aid Class with CPR training, as well.

Library – We have books on a variety of topics you may find helpful available for you to check out. We expect our clients to read a lot (and ask questions). Someone at the front desk will help you. Please be sure to return borrowed books. If you should have any books you would like to donate when you are finished with them we would be happy to add them to the library.

Videos and DVDs – We have birth and childcare videos and DVDs available for viewing here (sorry, they cannot be checked out). You may want to plan some extra time before or after your regular visit or drop in another time convenient to you during our office hours. Please call ahead to check on the availability of the education room.

Prenatal Exercise Classes – Classes are available at the YMCA, Triangle Yoga Center and many other locations in the community. We encourage exercise on a daily basis, such as walking or swimming.

Birth Plans - You made a careful decision to give birth in a freestanding birth center, which gives you the option of planning many aspects of your birth. Decisions about who you would like to attend your birth are very personal and can make a difference in the course of your labor. Choose only your partner or a very special friend or family member with whom you are completely comfortable. You may wish to have several loved ones present, but a large audience is usually not a good idea. If you feel you would like extra support during labor or if you do not have any support at the expected time of delivery, please discuss this with the midwives. We can recommend doulas (women trained to provide special support for birthing women, for a fee). Writing a birth plan is an important process. Taking time to think about your desires as well as your fears and concerns about labor and delivery will help you be more prepared. Talk with the midwives if you are identifying things you need and want to discuss about your upcoming birth. It is helpful for the staff to know what is important to you regarding your birth experience. We will give you more information about the birth plan in your third trimester.

Lactation Support - The entire WBWC staff is interested in helping you have a successful breastfeeding experience. Lactation support is an integral part of your postpartum care at the birth center. Our Lactation Services include International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC) for prenatal or postpartum support. We encourage you to attend the Breastfeeding Basics class which is offered regularly at no charge and Express Yourself: Pumping and Working class, held monthly for a small fee. Check at the front desk for date, time and signing up. These classes are intended to give you the information you need to get off to a good start with breastfeeding. We will assist you with your first feedings at the birth center, and check in with you by phone on the first and second days following the birth. We will make a home visit on your third day, or earlier if you are having any difficulties with breastfeeding.

If your baby’s weight at the home visit is more than 7-10% below birth weight, or if you are having any problems, we may suggest that you schedule an appointment with one of our IBCLCs. Brief weight checks may be done as needed. As your baby grows and changes, new challenges may arise and we are happy to provide brief telephone support. For lengthy discussion or complicated situations we may encourage you to come in for a visit, as we can help you most effectively when we can see how your baby is behaving at the breast.

If your baby’s weight at the home visit is more than 7-10% below birth weight, or if you are having any problems, we may suggest that you schedule an appointment with one of our IBCLCs. Brief weight checks may be done as needed. As your baby grows and changes, new challenges may arise and we are happy to provide brief telephone support. For lengthy discussion or complicated situations we may encourage you to come in for a visit, as we can help you most effectively when we can see how your baby is behaving at the breast.
BIRTH CENTER CHECKLIST

___ Tour the facility.

___ Read, understand, and sign the Client Registration Form, front and back, with attention to the Financial Policy and Advanced Beneficiary Notice.

___ Carefully read WBWC General Consent and Family Responsibilities, discuss with your partner or other support person(s), sign, and return.

___ Complete and return 3-Day Nutrition Diary.

___ Register for and complete childbirth education classes or refresher course, as appropriate.

___ Interview and choose a health care provider for your baby.

___ Investigate and choose an insurance carrier to cover your baby.

___ Arrange for childcare for other children during the birth and postpartum stay, whether coming to the birth or remaining at home.

___ Write your birth plan and discuss with a midwife.

___ Bring a map and directions to your home for the home visit nurse.

___ Fill out the FMLA/Disability Request form and turn in with your employer disability paperwork for completion.

___ Attend the breastfeeding class (highly recommended for first time moms or moms who want a review).