



Guide to Labor & Delivery

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Welcome to Ochsner Lafayette General

Congratulations on your growing family! We are honored to be part of this special time in your life.

At Ochsner Lafayette General Medical Center, our birthing center is modern, safe, and welcoming. Our nurses, doctors, and childbirth educators are here to take great care of you and your baby.

Your health—and your baby's health—are our top priorities.

We are proud to be the only hospital in Lafayette that is ready for all types of births, from simple to complex. If you or your baby need extra care, we have special services right here in the same building, including care for you and your newborn.

We're here for you—every step of the way.



About Ochsner Lafayette General Medical Center

At Ochsner Lafayette General Medical Center, we give full support to all birthing families. We are the largest hospital in Acadiana that offers complete care. We focus on you and your baby, using the best medical practices.

No matter how you choose to give birth, our team works with you. We listen to what you want and need. Our goal is to give safe, high-quality care that fits your wishes and supports a healthy birth.

We Are Birth Ready+

We are the only hospital in Acadiana to earn the **Birth Ready+ award** from the Louisiana Perinatal Quality Collaborative. This means we meet the highest standards for safety, expert care, and support for all people giving birth and their babies. Our trained team works to give the best care to every patient and newborn.



We Support Breastfeeding: We Have the GIFT

Ochsner Lafayette General was the first hospital in Lafayette to earn the **G.I.F.T. (Guided Infant Feeding Techniques) award**. This means we follow the Ten Steps to a Healthy Breastfed Baby, based on advice from the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF.



If you want to breastfeed, we are here to teach, support, and encourage you every step of the way.

We're Among the Best Hospitals for Maternity Care

US News & World Report named us one of the **Best Hospitals for Maternity Care** in 2025.

This means we do a great job in

- Using birth-friendly practices
- Keeping babies safe and healthy
- Supporting breastfeeding
- Helping families feel ready and informed
- Making sure we have enough staff to give great care
- Following the latest medical guidelines



Get Ready to Say “Hello!”

Planning ahead can help you feel more at ease. Here’s how we can help you and your family get ready for the big day.

Take a Tour

We’d love to show you around! A hospital tour helps you and your support person feel confident about your birth plan. It also lets you see how we will honor your preferences and meet your medical needs.

For tour details, call us at 337-289-7210.

Take a Class

Childbirth Education Class

Our free classes teach the basics of birth and newborn care. Classes are led by experienced nurses who explain what to expect and what your choices are.

- Free – but registration is required
- Support people are welcome

To find class times and register, visit ochsnerstore.org/classes-events

Labor & Delivery / Cesarean Childbirth Class

Learn what to expect during labor and birth, including

- What happens to your body during labor
- The steps of giving birth
- Pain relief and medicine options
- Why a C-section (Cesarean birth) may be planned or unplanned
- Caring for yourself and your baby afterward

Children’s Class for Big Brothers and Big Sisters

This class helps kids feel ready for a new baby at home. Kids learn

- What babies can and can’t do
- How babies eat
- How they can help change diapers and be great helpers



Infant CPR Class

Parents, grandparents, and others learn the basics of infant CPR. **This class is for learning only and does not include official CPR certification.**

Breastfeeding Your Infant Class

Our expert team will teach

- How to get ready to breastfeed
- Tips to help you start and keep going
- Common concerns and how to handle them

Breastfeeding Support for the Working Mother Class

Planning to breastfeed and work? This class covers

- How to pump and store milk
- How to keep up your milk supply
- Tips for breastfeeding while working



We're here to support every family and every birth—your way.

Get Prepared

As the big day gets closer, being ready can help you feel calm and confident. 4 to 6 weeks before your due date is a great time to start getting things ready for your baby's arrival and your hospital stay.

Some things you can do now

- ☐ Pack your hospital bag (see next page).
- ☐ Make a birth plan and share it with your provider.
- ☐ Plan how you'll get to the hospital.
- ☐ Choose who will be with you during labor and birth.
- ☐ Set up a safe place for your baby to sleep at home.
- ☐ Wash baby clothes, blankets, and bottles.
- ☐ Install your car seat (ask for help if you need it).



Pack Your Hospital Bag

These small comforts can help you feel more at ease during your stay.

Items for you and your support person

During labor

- ☐ Cell phone and charger
- ☐ A book, music, or something relaxing to help pass the time
- ☐ Lip balm or ChapStick®
- ☐ Snacks for your support person so they can stay close



After the birth

- ☐ Comfortable socks or slippers and bathrobe
- ☐ Two sets of sleep clothes for you and your support person (pajamas or tops that open in front make it easier for middle-of-the-night feedings)
- ☐ Toothbrush and toothpaste
- ☐ Soap and deodorant
- ☐ Sanitary pads
- ☐ Change of clothes for you and your support person
- ☐ Loose, comfortable clothes for going home

If you plan to breastfeed

- ☐ Boppy® pillow or breastfeeding support pillow
- ☐ Nursing bras or soft, stretchy underclothes
- ☐ Breast pads or shields



Items for baby

Pack a few soft and comfy items for your newborn's first days.

- ☐ T-shirt or undershirt
- ☐ Onesies, socks, and scratch mittens (enough for 2 or 3 days)
- ☐ Going home outfit
- ☐ Two or three baby blankets in different weights (light and warm)
- ☐ Hat (your baby will also get a hat in our nursery)



No need to bring wet wipes or disposable diapers. Your baby's admission packet will include these items.

Choose and Install a Car Seat

Every baby must leave the hospital in a rear-facing car seat. Make sure you choose the right one and know how to use it before your delivery day.

Please install the car seat in your vehicle ahead of time. Hospital staff cannot install it or show you how to use it.



For tips on picking and installing a car seat, visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA): nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/car-seats-and-booster-seats or scan this code.



Choose a Pediatrician

Your baby will need a pediatrician during your stay at the hospital. You'll be asked to give the name of your chosen pediatrician when you are admitted.

It's a good idea to ask friends or family for recommendations early. You can also schedule a prenatal visit to meet the pediatrician before your baby is born.

If your chosen pediatrician works in another city or is not part of Ochsner Lafayette General, an on-call pediatrician will care for your baby during your hospital stay. To see a list of pediatricians on staff, visit doctors.ochsner.org.

Know When to Go



You might be in labor if you notice these signs.

- Regular contractions in your belly (uterine contractions)
- Blood and mucus coming from the vagina (also called bloody show)
- Your water breaks (rupture of membranes)

What are labor contractions?

During a contraction, your uterus becomes tight and hard. Before true labor begins, these are known as Braxton Hicks contractions, or false labor. Braxton Hicks contractions are “practice contractions” that help your body get ready.

As your due date gets closer, you might feel mild contractions many times a day. If these don’t get stronger or last longer, they usually aren’t true labor.

How to know if labor has started

To tell if your labor has started, watch your contractions.

- Write down when each contraction starts and ends to see how long it lasts.
- Note when the next contraction starts and ends.
- Measure the time from the start of one contraction to the start of the next.
- If your contractions are more than 10 minutes apart or not regular, they might be Braxton Hicks or very early labor. You can keep doing your normal activities until they stop or get closer together.



Remember to drink plenty of water (at least 64 ounces or 8 cups a day) and eat meals with protein.

Your doctor will tell you when to call or go to the hospital. Usually, you should call when contractions

- Are about 5 minutes apart
- Last about 1 minute each
- Continue like this for over an hour

If you have given birth before, your doctor might ask you to call sooner.

True Labor vs False Labor

True Labor	False Labor
Contractions get stronger, last longer, and happen closer together as time goes on.	Contractions stay the same or get weaker.
Contractions come in a regular pattern (like every 5 minutes).	Contractions happen at irregular times.
Walking or changing positions makes contractions stronger but does not change how long they last.	You walk or change positions and contractions stay the same.
You might see bloody show (mucus that looks cloudy with pink or red streaks).	Bloody show usually does not happen.
Contractions usually start in your back and then move to your belly.	You feel pain or pressure in the front or higher up in your belly.
The cervix (the opening to the uterus) gets thinner and opens (effacement). Your caregiver checks this during an exam.	The cervix does not open even though you have contractions.
	You take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and it slows down or stops contractions.



Know Where to Go

If you arrive between 5:30 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.
— Use the Main Entrance

If you think you are in labor, your water has broken, or you have a pregnancy concern, go to the Main Entrance of the hospital.

- Take the elevator in the lobby to the 2nd floor.
- On the 2nd floor, go to the double doors for **Labor & Delivery**, across from the elevator.
- Press the doorbell and wait for the green light before going in.
- Once inside, check in at the nurses' station.



If you arrive between 8:00 p.m. and 5:30 a.m.
— Use the Emergency Room

If you come during the night, enter through the Emergency Room (ER).

- Go to the **main ER registration desk** and let them know why you are there.
- A staff member will take you to Labor & Delivery.



Pregnancy or Postpartum Concerns or Emergencies

If you have a pregnancy-related concern or emergency during pregnancy or after birth, please go to the Emergency Room (ER). The ER team will bring you to the Obstetric Emergency Department.

There, nurses and doctors trained in pregnancy care will check you. They will decide if you need to stay in the hospital or if you can be watched for a while to see how things go. They may also suggest tests to help decide what care you need.

If you stay in the hospital or are closely watched, we will let your OB doctor or the OB doctor on call know. They will manage your care from that point.

Get the Facts: Labor Induction & Augmentation

Every person's labor is different. Sometimes, labor needs a little help to start (called induction) or to get stronger and work better (called augmentation).

Labor is usually started by induction if someone goes past their due date. Doctors usually do not induce labor before 39 weeks unless there is a medical reason. For first-time births, induction is usually not done before 40 weeks.

Reasons to induce labor include

- Health problems like diabetes or high blood pressure
- Baby is in distress (found through tests)
- Difficult deliveries in the past
- Special conditions for the baby

Talk with your doctor about the risks and benefits of induction. Most of the time, it's best to let your body go into labor naturally.

Labor is often helped along (augmented) if contractions are not strong enough or frequent enough. Your doctor may also help if your water breaks or leaks before labor starts.

Induction and augmentation are usually done by breaking the water bag or giving medicine. Your doctor will explain which way is best for you.

If you expect to be induced

Your physician's office will tell you the date and time to arrive at the hospital. **The day before your scheduled appointment, someone from the hospital will call you around 4 p.m. to confirm your appointment.**



Please call Labor & Delivery at 337-289-7210 one hour before your scheduled arrival time to confirm room availability. During times of high patient volume, we may postpone elective procedures to accommodate patients in active labor.

We recommend you **arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled time.** This will allow time for registration and for us to ensure your room is prepared.

Once you are in your room, a nurse will go through several steps to get you ready to be induced. The nurse will

- Ask some questions about you and your medical history. This helps us better care for you and your baby.
- Review your OB's induction orders
- Apply fetal monitors
- Insert an intravenous (IV) line
- Administer any medications your OB has ordered

What to Expect: Vaginal Labor & Delivery

You are in charge of your labor. Our nurses are here to support you and help you feel comfortable.

A personal nurse – called a stork nurse – will check your baby during recovery, encourage skin-to-skin contact, and provide support to start feeding early.

Every birth is different, but here's what you can generally expect.

- Your OB and nurse will keep track of how your labor progresses.
- You may get an IV to give fluids, medicine, or for emergency use if needed.
- With your permission, your nurse or OB may do cervical exams to see how your labor is progressing and help plan your care.
- Mirrors are available if you want to watch your baby being born.
- After your baby is born, you will usually stay in Labor & Delivery for about 2 hours. During this time, we'll watch you closely to help you recover smoothly.
- Unless there are medical reasons, your baby will stay with you during recovery to help you bond.
- When your OB says you are ready, you and your baby will move to a Mother-Baby suite.



Get the Facts: Cesarean Birth (C-Section)

A cesarean birth, or C-section, is a surgery to deliver a baby through a cut made in the lower belly. A doctor may decide a C-section is needed before or during labor.

Because it is surgery, you will get medicine to help with pain. This is usually done with a shot in your back to ensure you feel no pain but stay awake.

Reasons for a C-section include

- The baby is not in the right position (for example, feet or bottom first, facing up, or lying sideways)
- The baby's heartbeat shows signs of stress
- The baby is too big to fit through the pelvis, or the pelvis is too small
- The birthing parent has a medical condition that makes vaginal birth unsafe
- The cervix doesn't open (dilate) enough, even with strong contractions
- The placenta is blocking the opening of the uterus (placenta previa), or comes off the wall of the uterus early (placental abruption)
- The umbilical cord slips into the birth canal ahead of the baby (called a prolapsed cord)

Your care team will explain why a C-section might be needed and will make sure you understand each step.

If you are having a planned C-section

Your doctor's office will tell you the date and time to arrive at the hospital. You will usually need to arrive 2 to 3 hours before surgery.

The day before your C-section, someone from the hospital will call you around 4 p.m. to confirm your arrival time.

We suggest arriving 15 minutes early. This gives you time to check in and helps us make sure your room is ready.

After you check in, you'll go to a special area to get ready for surgery. A nurse will help prepare you. They may

- Start an IV (a small tube in your vein to give you fluids or medicine)
- Clean your belly where the cut will be made
- Apply fetal monitors to check the baby's heartbeat

Before surgery begins, you will meet with your doctor and the team that gives you anesthesia (medicine to prevent pain).

What to Expect: Cesarean Birth (C-section)

At Ochsner Lafayette General Medical Center, we have four fully equipped operating rooms for Cesarean births. No matter the situation, we're here to make your baby's birth a safe and special experience.

- A member of the anesthesia team will give you spinal or epidural medicine to ensure you don't feel pain. This is usually a shot in the back that removes pain but enables you to stay awake.
- You are usually allowed two support people with you during the surgery, unless there is an emergency.
- We use clear drapes so you can see your baby right after birth.
- After your baby is born, a special "stork team" will check your baby, then bring your baby to you and your support team.
- Your nurse can help you or another parent or loved one hold your baby skin-to-skin while the surgery is finishing.
- After the surgery, your baby and support person(s) will go to the recovery room first, while staff help move you to a comfortable hospital bed.
- You'll join your baby in the recovery room. Your care team will watch you closely for about 1 hour to make sure you're recovering well.
- When both you and your baby are ready, you'll move together to the Mother-Baby Suites to rest and recover.



A Family is Born!

One of the best parts of our family-centered care is that your baby stays with you after birth.

You, your support person or group, and your baby will stay together in Labor & Delivery before moving to your private Mother-Baby Suite.

What is Mother-Baby Nursing?

While you're here, you and your baby will have a nurse who takes care of both of you. This nurse is trained to understand what both new parents and newborns need.

All of your baby's care will happen right in your room. This helps

- You and your baby stay close
- Your family feel more involved
- Nurses respond more quickly
- Everyone feel less interrupted
- You get more quiet time to bond with your baby and rest.



Feeling Hungry?

We offer snacks between meals and room service straight to your suite. If you had a C-section, your doctor may order a special diet with extra fluids.

Our cafeteria is open every day from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. We also offer a celebration meal for you and one guest to enjoy together during your stay.



You Have Choices

- **Decide who visits you and when.** During labor two visitors are allowed at one time, plus a doula or birthing/Lamaze coach.
- After the birth, family and friends can remain in your room during your stay. **If you need a break**, there's a comfortable family waiting area and a family break room where visitors can gather.
- **You can plan your labor and delivery environment**, from music choices to your choice of pain control.
- **Bring your own snacks and drinks.** All rooms have a mini-fridge.
- How you keep your newborn with you after delivery. Our stork nurse can help you hold baby skin-to-skin and start breastfeeding immediately if you choose – even after a C-section (if medically appropriate)

What is Kangaroo Care?

Kangaroo care is skin-to-skin contact with your baby.

It's a special way to hold your baby while in the hospital. It's similar to the way a mother kangaroo carries her baby in the pouch. In kangaroo care, you hold your baby, naked except for a diaper, on your bare chest and cover him or her with a blanket or clothing.

Any parent or family member can do kangaroo care.

For mothers, kangaroo care

- Promotes closeness and attachment
- Eases worry
- Helps them know when the baby wants to eat
- Encourages hormones to start the flow of breast milk
- Helps them achieve breastfeeding goals
- Raises their confidence
- Helps boost their immune system and pass this to baby through breast milk

For fathers, kangaroo care

- Promotes closeness and attachment
- Enhances their sense of control
- Starts hormones which increase their protective instincts
- Helps them cope with the stress of a very sick NICU baby

ALL babies benefit from kangaroo care.

Kangaroo care helps them

- Stay calm and more comfortable
- Gain weight
- Sleep more deeply and quietly
- Feed successfully
- Maintain normal temperature, breathing and blood pressure
- Tolerate painful procedures like heel sticks better
- Bond with parents
- Go home sooner!

Ask your stork nurse to help you hold baby skin-to-skin!



Helpful Information

Breastfeeding Resource Center

All of our nurses in the Mother-Baby, Labor, and Antenatal units are trained to help you feed your baby in the way that works best for your family. From the first hour after birth (called the Golden Hour) until you go home, we'll help you

- Learn your baby's hunger signs
- Bond with your baby
- Feel more confident as a new parent

If you are breastfeeding, one of our lactation consultants will visit you during your stay. They will offer support, answer questions, and help you get started with breastfeeding.



If you have questions, please call us at 337-289-7227.

Birth Certificate & Social Security Number

Shortly after the birth of your baby, you will be contacted to provide the necessary information for us to apply for your baby's birth certificate and Social Security documents.

After your baby is born, a birth certificate clerk will contact you to finish all the details.

You will need to bring certain information to the hospital to apply for the baby's birth certificate and Social Security number

- Baby's full name
- Valid photo IDs for parent(s) to be named on the birth certificate
- Social Security numbers of parent(s)
- Legal names of parent(s) as they should appear on the birth certificate

If you are not married and do not want, or are not able, to list the father, only the mother's name will appear on the birth certificate.

Under Louisiana law, a husband's name will automatically be listed as the baby's father.

Louisiana law has special requirements for unmarried couples who want both names on the birth certificate. Ask to speak to our birth certificate clerk. They can explain the process and assist with the necessary steps.

Security

Your safety is very important to us. Our birth and baby care areas are locked and secure to help protect all patients, families, and staff.

Visiting Your Room

When someone wants to visit you and your baby, they must ring the doorbell and give your name and room number. This helps us keep track of who is coming in and out.

Baby ID and Safety

After your baby is born, we will place matching ID bracelets on

- You
- One support person
- Your baby

This is done before you move from the Labor & Delivery area to your hospital room.

Your baby will also get a special security bracelet on their leg. This tag connects to our hospital's safety system.

If your baby gets too close to an exit, the doors will lock and our team will be alerted right away.



Important Phone Numbers

Breastfeeding Resource Center337-289-7227
Labor & Delivery337-289-7210
Lori's Gifts337-289-7194
Mother-Baby Suites337-289-7226
NICU337-289-7782
Outpatient Pharmacy337-289-8126



Tips to help keep your baby safe

- **Never leave your baby alone in your room.** If you need to leave, call your nurse so someone can stay with your baby.
- Only staff with a **pink-bordered ID badge** are allowed to take your baby out of the room.
- **If someone seems suspicious or something doesn't feel right**, tell the nurse's station right away.
- **Please don't give personal info over the phone.** Vendors (people selling things) should not call your room.



For Our Visitors

We're excited to share this special time with you and your loved ones! Our hospital is designed to help both patients and families feel welcome and comfortable.

To keep everyone safe—especially your new baby—we ask visitors to follow these guidelines. Please call us before your delivery to check for any updates.

- One support person is welcome to stay with you all day and night.
- Up to three visitors at a time can visit in Labor & Delivery, even during the birth.
- After the baby is born, one support person may stay overnight in your room.
- We kindly ask that children under 12 wait to visit until after the baby is born.
- No one under 18 is allowed in the operating room unless they are the baby's parent.
- Once you're in your Mother-Baby room, visitors are welcome daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- To help you rest, we observe a quiet time every day from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. You can ask to limit visitors during this time.
- Visitors can relax in our family waiting room, which includes free coffee, a microwave, and vending machines.
- Our cafeteria is open daily from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. with a variety of food options for guests.



Special Medical Services

We hope your pregnancy, labor, and delivery go smoothly. But if you or your baby need extra care, Ochsner Lafayette General Medical Center is ready to help.

Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

Some babies need special care after birth. Our NICU is made just for newborns who need extra support. We have skilled doctors, nurses, and other experts who care for our tiniest patients.

This team includes

- Neonatal nurse practitioners
- Registered nurses
- Neonatologists (doctors for newborns)
- Pediatric subspecialists
- Respiratory therapists, dietitians, lactation consultants, and more

Our NICU has different levels of care, so babies can move to quieter areas as they grow stronger. **Parents are always included and taught how to care for their baby.** We help you feel confident and ready to go home when it's time. If you're breastfeeding, our team will support you—even if your baby is in the NICU.

Perinatal Care

If you or your baby have higher health risks, we offer special rooms (perinatologist-dedicated rooms) and care for these needs. Our team supports you before, during, and after birth.

Adult Intensive Care Unit

We're the only hospital in the Lafayette area that provides ICU care for adults and pregnancy care in one place. If there's an emergency, both you and your baby can get care in the same hospital, close to each other.

Emergency Pediatric Care

Our Emergency Room has a special area just for children. Emergency staff have special certifications to treat kids. A pediatrician is available during certain hours. Ask your nurse for details.

Obstetric Emergency Department

If you are 20 weeks pregnant or more—or up to 6 weeks after giving birth—and have a pregnancy-related emergency, you'll be seen in our Obstetric ER. **It's open 24/7 and has nurses and doctors who specialize in pregnancy-related care.**

Notes



1-866-OCHSNER | ochsner.org