



HAVING A BABY

*«You are the bow from which your children as living arrows
are sent forth».*

- Kahil Gibran

Having a baby is one of the most important and challenging events of your life. Being far away from home, family and friends may make it all seem a bit overwhelming. However, the good news is that Zurich is a great place to give birth. Not only do you have a choice of excellent professional services and facilities, but there is also substantial support during the postpartum period for the well being of the entire family.

ANTENATAL

Caregivers, Health Insurance, Maternal Care, Photographers,
Preparing for Childbirth

CAREGIVERS

For the duration of a normal healthy pregnancy medical controls are typically scheduled once every four to six weeks, sometimes increasing to every two weeks in the last month. If a woman is considered at risk, develops complications or goes over her expected date of delivery, the visits will be more frequent.

MIDWIVES (HEBAMMEN)

«I cannot understand why people talk about ‘natural’ childbirth. It seems like a redundant statement. Childbirth is natural. To have to specify it as such really says something about what we have done to the process. And you just cannot say, ‘Go ahead and do it’. Many women do not know how. You really need to be there by her side and help that person to labour and to do it naturally. Midwives give that control back to the woman.»

- Shari Conte, Midwife

Midwives have maintained an important role in the process of birth despite the fact that it has become more technically oriented as women began birthing in hospitals. In Swiss hospitals the midwife continues to play a central role in guiding women through labour and sometimes through the delivery (dependant primarily upon where you give birth).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) advocates midwives as being the most appropriate healthcare professionals to care for women with ‘normal’ pregnancies, labours and for the duration of the postnatal

time (WHO 1996). Throughout Zurich there are midwifery practices where a woman can obtain antenatal care for the duration of her pregnancy. Contact the association of midwives (details follow) for information or go to www.TheStork.ch for a partial listing.

Swiss Association of Midwives

Central Administration, Flurstrasse 26, 3000 Bern 22, 031 332 6340,
Christine Rieben & Yvonne Baumgartner,
info@hebamme.ch, www.hebamme.ch

Publishes a booklet of licensed self-employed midwives listed by canton and town. Included are the services offered and the languages spoken by each.

Zurich Branch (cantonal), Sonnenberg 33, 8636 Wald, 055 246 6080,
Ruth Riggerbach Steiner (co-president), rist@active.ch

Ask for a list of independent midwives practising in your region.

Zurich Midwifery Centre (24-hour contact) 079 430 4066

OBSTETRICIANS / GYNAECOLOGISTS

Doctors in Switzerland are not legally permitted to advertise their services. They can be found in the telephone book under ‘Aerzte’ (*Gynäkologie und Geburtshilfe*). Hospitals will usually provide names of doctors (a private hospital will list only those doctors affiliated with its institution), and The Stork Knows maintains a list of obstetricians and gynaecologists who have been recommended by other women: 01 926 5748, doctors@TheStork.ch.

Obstetricians affiliated with a hospital and attending a woman during birth are referred to as ‘Belegsaerzte’. These doctors are typically associated with three different hospitals. If you have chosen your doctor in advance of selecting the hospital in which you wish to deliver, you will be limited to the hospitals s/he is affiliated with (if you wish to have him or her at the birth). Alternatively, if you choose your place of birth before you choose your doctor, request a list of obstetricians/gynaecologists associated with that hospital.

Non-private hospitals have their own staff of obstetricians who back up the births attended by midwives. Your private doctor is generally not permitted to work in these hospitals (unless s/he happens to be a member of that hospital’s staff).

HEALTH INSURANCE

Every resident of Switzerland is required by law to have the minimum Swiss health insurance coverage (*allgemeine Krankenversicherung*). Although there are three levels of coverage available, you will not be eligible for private (*privat*) or semi-private (*halbprivat*) insurance if you are currently pregnant or become pregnant within 270 days after the policy commences. It is important to note that this does not affect the quality of medical care you will receive.

Each of the three available levels of health insurance guarantee coverage of costs incurred for the delivery of your baby in a city or regional hospital, birthing centre or at home (with a licensed midwife). Private and semi-private policies allow you to also include private clinics among your choices and stipulate that your obstetrician (or his or her associate) attend the birth (normally in a labour without complications your doctor will appear only at end of the process for the delivery of the baby). Basic insurance usually means a midwife delivery with obstetrician present.

Each child must be personally insured. The mother's policy will cover the baby only from the date of birth. Thus, it is strongly advised to sign the insurance policy prior to the baby's birth in the event of unforeseen circumstances such as premature birth or undetected health problems.

As defined by governmental guidelines, health insurance coverage for postnatal healthcare with a midwife totals ten days (unless otherwise prescribed by a doctor). This includes the number of days spent in hospital or birthing centre. In addition three private breastfeeding consultations are paid for.

Neutral Insurance Centre

Neutrales Versicherungs-Center, NVC Basel: Picassoplatz 8, 4052 Basel,

061 227 9595, 076 399 7943, www.nvc.ch, infob@nvc.ch

Works independently on the insurance market (all branches) in finding the appropriate company and policy to match individual needs. Staff of four who speak English and are skilled in the issues of expat needs.

www.comparis.ch

Online comparison of insurance companies, company services and

costs (English, French, Italian and German).

MATERNITY CLOTHING

Refer to chapter 4, 'Let's Go Shopping'.

MATERNAL CARE

FITNESS & YOGA

Birth Energetics

Carol Isler, Neugasse 9, 5707 Seengen, 062 777 1035, ichisler@mysunrise.ch

Antenatal and postnatal exercises (with baby) in English. Studios in Zumikon and Zurich.

Integral Yoga

Therese Riedweg, Hofenstrasse 89a, 8708 Männedorf, 01 920 2252
Integrates pregnant women into classes in Männedorf and Stäfa.
Conducted in German (speaks English).

Yoga Bernardi

Cheryl Bernardi, 01 401 5464, yoga@cherylbernardi.ch

Prenatal and postnatal yoga (with baby) in English and German.
Centrally located studios in Zurich city.

Yoga & Fitness

Claire Dalloz, Lindenstrasse 6, 8125 Zollikerberg,
01 392 1917, cdalloz@yahoo.com

Classes in English and German. Studio in Zollikon.

MASSAGE

Holistic Therapy

Sally Christ, Forchstrasse 21, 8032 Zürich,
079 362 7646, salchrist@hotmail.com

Trained in a broad background of therapies including cranial-sacral, massage for pregnant women and foot reflexology.

DeDe McNeal

Torgasse 6, 8001 Zürich, 079 657 7251, www.dedemcneal.ch

Massage therapist specialising in pain, tension and stress reduction

and pre-natal massage.

NUTRITIONAL GUIDANCE

Optinutrition

Chantal Keiser, Blümlisalpstrasse 3, 8006 Zürich, 01 262 3505, info@optinutrition.ch, www.optinutrition.ch

Nutrition therapist who assists people in taking ownership of their health through nutrition and lifestyle. Specialises in developing individual programmes that suit your needs, particularly those of pregnant women and children.

SWIMMING

Water is one of the best ways for a pregnant woman to relax and take the weight off her feet. Many hospitals have their own pools and offer exercise classes for pregnant women in water. Although classes are conducted in German, there is little theory and the midwives usually speak some English. Inquire at the hospital nearest you. Refer to the list of hospitals in this chapter.

Aqua aerobics are offered in many of the public swimming pools. See chapter 16, 'Pools & Beaches' for a pool in your vicinity.

WATER SHIATSU

An optimal way to relax during pregnancy and prepare for birth.

Claudia Bettenmann (midwife)

Dorfstrasse 23, 8800 Thalwil, 01 722 3045, claudia@snowhow.ch
Sessions in Horgen and Lagnau am Albis.

Gaby Ranz

Glärnischstrasse 139, 8708 Männerdorf, 01 920 7711, gaby.ranz@gmx.ch
Sessions in Zurich and Männerdorf.

Sonja Frey (midwife)

David Hess-Weg 34, 8038 Zürich, 01 481 7592
Private sessions at the University Hospital Zurich pool.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

iDarling Photography – Pregnant Images

Janet Darling, 043 888 0021, info@idarling.ch
Photographer (and mother), works with you to create sensual images in a relaxed and personal atmosphere. English and German.

Julieta Schildknecht

Photoarchivco, 079 602 2617, 01 382 3156
julietaschildknecht@photoarchivco.ch, www.photoarchivco.ch
English, Spanish and German

PREPARING FOR CHILDBIRTH

COURSES FOR COUPLES

It is recommended to begin a course in childbirth preparation around the twenty-sixth week of pregnancy. This is a time when you and your partner begin to focus on the actual process of labour and delivery. Participating in a childbirth class not only assists you in preparing for birth and parenthood, but also serves to reduce your anxieties about having a baby in Switzerland, and connects you to other couples about to enter the realm of parenthood. A great way to create a support network!

The Stork Knows

Wässerwies 11, 8712 Stäfa, 01 926 5748, info@TheStork.ch, www.TheStork.ch
Classes in English are provided by a staff of professionals and include preparation for childbirth, breastfeeding, infant care, baby massage, first-aid, workshops on raising multilingual children. The courses and services offered are designed to provide a platform of family support, eg, baby and toddlers playgroups (Zurich, Kilchberg, and Stäfa) where you can meet other new parents. Ask for a free information packet.

Hospital Offerings

Inquire at your local hospital about the availability of childbirth preparation classes in English. Some private hospitals that have begun to offer these are *Bethanian*, *Hirslanden* and *Klinik im Park*.

Refer to 'Hospitals' in this chapter.

PARENTAL SUPPORT

Baby-joy.ch

Joy Rigonalli, Hüblistrasse 34, 8165 Oberweiningen,
info@baby-joy.ch, www.baby-joy.ch

Paediatric nurse-practitioner, mother of two young children, counsels on issues both practical (products best suited to your needs) and emotional (what to expect as a new parent). English and German.

BIRTH

Choosing Your Place of Birth, Birthing Centres, Homebirths, Hospitals with Birthing Units

CHOOSING YOUR PLACE OF BIRTH

The best place for you to give birth is where you feel 'safe'. Some women want only to be at home while others need the security of a high-tech environment. A range of options is available in Zurich: home birth (approximately 1.5% of all births in Switzerland), birthing centre (15 exist throughout the country) and hospital. The majority of births in Switzerland currently take place in hospitals, all of which maintain high medical standards, employing midwives on their birthing units. Independent midwifery practices and birthing centres work in affiliation with hospitals and doctors.

The World Health Organisation and UNICEF state that babies and mothers face the lowest risks in countries that combine professional midwifery care with high medical standards. Switzerland ranks as having one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the world: 4.4.

BABY FRIENDLY HOSPITAL INITIATIVE

The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative is a global campaign launched by the United Nation's International Children's Educational Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1991 in support of the mother's right to choose breastfeeding for her baby. To earn the 'Baby Friendly Hospital Award', facilities have to demonstrate that they have fully adopted the following *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*:

1. All healthcare staff receive written guidelines regarding breastfeeding promotion.
2. Caretakers are regularly given the opportunity to participate in educational classes to fulfil these guidelines.
3. All pregnant women are informed about the advantages and techniques of breastfeeding.
4. Mothers are assisted in breastfeeding their babies within the first hour after birth.
5. Mothers are shown how to successfully breastfeed if they have to be separated from their babies, eg, mothers of premature, sick or babies with disabilities, receive special help to support breastfeeding at a later time.
6. Infants who are breastfed receive supplemental feedings only in cases where the mother's milk does not meet their needs.
7. Rooming-in is available to all mothers, ie, mother and baby are given the opportunity to be together day and night.
8. Encourage breastfeeding upon demand, ie, according to the baby's rhythm.
9. Pacifiers and bottles are not used in the first days after birth and later only when necessary.
10. Contact with breastfeeding groups, midwives, certified lactation consultants, etc, are made available upon leaving the hospital.

2003 MOTHERS' INDEX

In 2003 the status of mothers was compared in 117 countries based on six factors of women's well-being (lifetime risk of maternal mortality, percent of women using modern contraception, percent of births attended by trained personnel, percent of pregnant women with anaemia, adult female literacy rate and participation of women in national government) and four factors of children's well being (infant mortality

rate, gross primary enrolment ratio, percent of population with access to safe water and percent of children under age five suffering from moderate or severe nutritional wasting).

Top Ten

1. Sweden
2. Denmark*
2. Norway*
4. Switzerland
5. Finland
6. Canada*
6. Netherlands*
8. Australia
9. Austria*
9. United Kingdom*

* = tie

Save the Children Foundation releases an annual State of the World's Mother's report. More information on the Mothers' Index can be found in the 2003 report, and on Save the Children's web site at www.savethechildren.org.

BIRTHING CENTRES

Birthing centres offer an alternative to both home birth and hospital. Typically founded and run by independent midwives, they provide a home-like environment and family-centred maternity care. All work in affiliation with medical doctors and hospitals as 'back-ups' when needed. Contact the centre nearest you for guidelines that must be met in order to give birth there. Costs for the following midwifery services are covered by basic Swiss health insurance:

- six pregnancy check-ups (more if complications arise)
- delivery of the baby
- ten days of midwifery care at home
- three breastfeeding consultations
- postnatal check-up at six to eight weeks after the birth

Since most birthing centres are not subsidised by the cantons, they also request a basic surcharge of CHF 550.–. Refer to individual birthing centres about insurance regulations and costs covered if remaining in the centre after the delivery of your child.

Link: www.geburtshaus.ch – Swiss birthing centres.

LENGTH OF STAY IN A BIRTHING CENTRE

It is customary for the father to remain with mother and baby in a family atmosphere unless an ambulant birth is preferred. Insurance usually pays for five days stay. Refer to the individual centre, however, to determine if a semi-private or private policy is required.

ZÜRICH CITY:

Delphys*

Friedaustasse 12, 8003 Zürich, 01 491 9120, www.delphys.ch
Full insurance coverage for the birth. Five days postnatal stay in the birthing house is paid for only if you have semiprivate or private insurance. The only birthing house in Switzerland (to date) that has received the *WHO/UNICEF 'Baby Friendly Hospital Award'.

ZÜRICH REGION:

Storchennäscht

Bahnhofstrasse 11, 5600 Lenzburg/Aargau,
062 885 8080, 079 684 0022, storchenaescht@bluewin.ch
Full insurance coverage for the birth plus five days postnatal stay.

Zürich Oberland

Tösstalstrasse 30, 8636 Wald, 055 246 6545, www.geburtshaus.ch/zho
Full insurance coverage for the birth plus five days postnatal stay (women from cantons outside of Zurich must obtain a guarantee of payment from their insurance company to qualify for coverage).

HOMEBIRTHS

A study released by the *Swiss National Fond* in 1993 confirms the fact that home births in Switzerland are unquestionably as safe as deliveries in hospitals. Specific guidelines, outlined here, must be met:

- perfect state of health (non-risk pregnancy)
- previous birth(s) proceeded normally
- one baby (excludes delivery of multiples)
- correct positioning of baby
- normal location of placenta
- delivery only between the 37th and 42nd week of pregnancy