

Birth Pool Guide

If you are thinking about using a birth pool, a little preparation beforehand means you can forget about the practicalities once labour begins. You do not need to decide in advance that you will definitely give birth in the pool. It can simply be available if you want it.

Hiring and checking your pool

■ Hire rather than buy Most people hire a purpose-made birth pool. A hire kit will usually include the pool, liner, hose and other equipment.	■ Check everything when it arrives Do not leave the box unopened until labour. Check what is included and read the supplier's instructions.
■ Test the tap adapter Make sure the supplied adapter fits the tap you intend to use. This is one of the most useful things to discover before labour rather than during it.	■ Check the hose reaches Make sure the hose comfortably reaches from the tap to where you plan to put the pool.

Choosing where to put it

Space	Allow enough room around the pool for you, your partner and the midwives to move comfortably.
Privacy	Think about windows and sightlines. Curtains, blinds or removable blackout film can make the room feel more private.
Water	Choose a position that makes filling and emptying the pool practical, following the instructions supplied with your hire kit.
Floor	Use the groundsheet or floor protection supplied with the pool hire kit and keep towels nearby for wet feet and splashes.

Keep these together

☐ Pool and liner	☐ Plenty of towels
☐ Hose and tap adapter	☐ Supplier instructions
☐ Groundsheet / floor protection	☐ Anything else included in your hire kit

Before labour

Show your birth partner where everything is and make sure they have read the pool instructions too. Your own homebirth team may have additional advice about using a pool at home, so ask them if there is anything specific they would like you to prepare.