



Mackay Hospital and Health Service Maternity Care Terms and Definitions

The information in this document presents a list of common maternity care terms and definitions which may be mentioned during consultation for the Maternity Co-Design Project. Please note, this is not an exhaustive list.

Term	Definition
Mackay Hospital and Health Service, Mackay HHS or MHHS	The Mackay Hospital and Health Service consists of eight hospitals and community health facilities which are situated in Mackay, Bowen, Clermont, Collinsville, Dysart, Proserpine, Moranbah and Sarina.
Women's Health Unit at Mackay Base Hospital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antenatal clinic • Maternity Day Assessment Unit • Birth Suite • Maternity Ward • Extended Midwifery Service 	The Women's Health Unit provides inpatient or outpatient care for pregnancy, birthing, antenatal and postnatal care and for women undergoing gynaecological procedures.
Mackay Birth Centre at Mackay Base Hospital	The Mackay Base Hospital Birth Centre is a stand-alone, home like maternity care facility located adjacent to the Birth Suite at the Mackay Base Hospital. The Birth Centre supports low-risk pregnancy through family friendly, woman-centred care with a holistic approach to pregnancy, birth and parenting.

Kem Kem Yanga Midwifery Group Practice	The Kem Kem Yanga Midwifery Group Practice is a model of care available for women who identify, or their baby who identifies, as Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander.
Maternally Yours Midwifery Group Practice	Maternally Yours Midwifery Group Practice (MGP) offers care to women with low-risk pregnancies, enabling a woman to be cared for by the same midwife and aims to provide women and their families with continuity of care throughout their pregnancy, birth and in the early postnatal period at home.
Extended Midwifery Service	Provides postnatal care in your home, including healthy hearing, neonatal newborn screen test, and feeding assessment/education.
Special Care Nursery	Special Care Nursery provides holistic neonatal care to unwell and premature babies.
Proserpine Hospital Maternity Care	Low risk maternity service, woman-centred midwifery model and a Midwifery Group Practice (MGP) model. Provides inpatient and outpatient care for pregnancy, labour, postnatal care and for women, extended midwifery service postnatally (home visits).
Continuity of Care	The philosophy of midwifery continuity of care models is continuity of care by a known midwife, with emphasis on normality and drawing on the inherent and natural (physiological) ability of the woman to experience pregnancy, labour and birth, and adapt to parenting with no or limited intervention required. Where women need medical assistance or care from other professionals, the midwife remains with the woman as her primary carer.
General Practitioner (GP)	A medical generalist who provides evidence based, person centred, continuing, comprehensive and coordinated whole person health care to individuals and families within their communities.

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Gynaecologist	A gynaecologist is a doctor who specialises in female reproductive health. They diagnose and treat issues related to the female reproductive tract. This includes the uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries and breasts.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Liaison Officer	The role of the Health Liaison Officer is to assist in the delivery of culturally appropriate care within the hospital environment. They are also able to provide assistance in supporting clients when important matters are discussed and advocate where assistance is required.
High risk	High risk means there are increased health risks for the pregnant woman, unborn baby or both. Birthing women are categorised based on their factors in accordance with the criteria set by the Australian College of Midwives. This categorisation may change during the patient journey.
Low risk	Low risk means the pregnancy is a normal, healthy, uncomplicated pregnancy with no known current risk factors. Birthing people are categorised based on their factors in accordance with the criteria set by the Australian College of Midwives. This categorisation may change during the patient journey.
Midwife	Midwife means 'with woman'. A midwife is a professional healthcare worker who specialises in providing care for women and their families throughout pregnancy, labour and birth, and after the birth. They provide 'woman centered care' placing the woman at the center of everything they do.
Model of care	The way maternity care is organised, who is providing care, how they are providing care and when they are providing care.
Obs & Gynae, OB/GYN and OBGYN	Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

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Obstetrician	Medical specialist who specialises in providing care for women and their families throughout pregnancy, labour and birth, and after birth.
Person-centred care	It is care that is respectful of, and responsive to, the preferences, needs and values of the individual birthing person. It involves seeking out, and understanding what is important to the woman, fostering trust, establishing mutual respect and working together to share decisions and plan care.

Maternity medical terms and definitions

Term	Definition
Amniocentesis	An ultrasound is preformed to guide a needle to extract a small amount of amniotic fluid. This sample can then be tested for genetic testing, fetal lung testing, diagnosis of fetal infection.
Antenatal	The period of pregnancy, before the birth.
Antibodies	Proteins produced by blood - checks are done to see that there is no problem between the mother's and baby's blood.
Auscultation	Listening to baby's heartbeat using a Doppler, Pinard or stethoscope.
Blood glucose level	The level of glucose in the blood. Blood glucose levels are monitored during pregnancy to help detect pregnancy specific (gestational) diabetes.
Birth plan	A birth plan is a written summary of your labour, birthing and postpartum preferences. It may include birthing positions, pain relief preferences and your support team. A birth plan can be a good way to communicate with your pregnancy care providers about what is important to you before the birth, during labour and the postpartum period. It gives them information about your preferences and what you would like to avoid, where possible.
Birthing with COVID	A Mackay Hospital and Health Service plan to care for women with confirmed or suspected COVID-19.
Breech	Unborn baby is lying bottom-down in the uterus.
Cardiotocography (CTG)	A technical means of recording the fetal heart rate and uterine contractions.

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Cephalic position	Unborn with their head lying head down in the uterus near the exit of the birth canal.
Engaged	Unborn baby's head, or bottom, is positioned in the mother's pelvis, ready to be born.
Ectopic pregnancy	A pregnancy in which implantation of the fertilised egg takes place outside the uterus, usually in a fallopian tube. Can cause rupture of the fallopian tube and severe internal bleeding.
Estimated date of baby's birth	It is normal for the baby to be born up to 2 weeks before / after this date.
Episiotomy	Surgical incision to enlarge the vaginal opening if needed, to help the birth.
Fetal heart rate	Unborn baby's heart rate.
Fetal movements	Unborn baby's movements.
Forceps	Instruments supporting baby's head to assist in childbirth.
Full-term	Pregnancy reaches 39 to 41 weeks.
Fundal height	Height of the uterus from symphysis pubis – expected to increase 1 cm per week from 20 – 36 weeks of pregnancy.
Gestational diabetes	Gestational diabetes mellitus – diabetes in pregnancy.
Gestation	Number of weeks pregnant.
Gestational hypertension	A rise in blood pressure during pregnancy which will require close monitoring.

Glucose tolerance test (GTT)	Diagnostic blood test for gestational diabetes which may develop during pregnancy. Conducted between 26 and 28 weeks.
Hypertension	High blood pressure.
Induction of labour	A procedure to artificially start the process of labour by way of medical, surgical or medical and surgical means.
Miscarriage	The spontaneous end of a pregnancy at a stage where the embryo or foetus is incapable of surviving independently, generally defined in humans as before 20 weeks.
Not engaged	Unborn baby's head, or bottom, has not entered the maternal pelvis.
Non-invasive prenatal testing or NIPT	This is a blood test that screens for common genetic conditions in the developing foetus such as Down syndrome, Edwards syndrome and Patau syndrome.
Oedema	Swelling generally of ankles, fingers or face.
Perinatal period	For the purposes of these guidelines, 'perinatal' is defined as the period covering pregnancy and the first year following pregnancy or birth. It is acknowledged that other definitions of this term are used for data collection and analysis. The definition used here broadens the scope of the term perinatal in line with understanding of mental health in pregnancy and following birth.
Postnatal	The period of time from birth of the baby to 6 weeks.
Placenta	The baby's lifeline to you, also known as after-birth.

Placenta praevia	An obstetric complication in which the placenta is attached to the uterine wall close to or covering the cervix.
Placental abruption	A potentially life-threatening obstetric complication in which the placenta separates from the uterus of the mother.
Posterior	The unborn baby is lying with its spine alongside mother's spine. This can result in stop/start labour, back pain in labour, and longer labours.
Pre-eclampsia	A condition that typically occurs after 20 weeks of pregnancy, it is a combination of raised blood pressure and protein in the urine.
Pre-term birth	Birth at less than 37 weeks gestation.
Spontaneous labour	Labour that occurs naturally.
SIDS	Sudden infant death syndrome.
SUDI	Sudden unexplained death in infancy.
Still birth	The birth of a baby that has died in the uterus after 20 weeks of pregnancy or reaching a weight of more than 400 g if gestational age is unknown.
TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation) machine	Non-invasive device, using small (non-painful) electrical messages to ease or manage pain.
Transverse	Unborn baby is lying crossways in the uterus.
Ultrasound or scan	Sound waves passed across the mother's abdomen are used to make pictures of the unborn baby.
VBAC	Vaginal birth after caesarean.