



PROCEDURE

Water for pain management during labour and/or birth

This document should be read in conjunction with the [Disclaimer](#)

Contents

Water birth	1
Preparation	2
Evacuation procedure: Labour/ birth in water	2
Key points	3
Placement of the pool in the room	3
Evacuation of an unconscious woman from the pool/bath	4
Instructions for use of the evacuation pod	4
Important notes	4
Documentation.....	5

Aims

- To provide midwives and doctors site specific guidance on caring for women who choose to use water in labour and /or birth.
- Process for successful evacuation of a woman from a birthing pool during labour and / or birth if required.

Water birth

KEMH and CMP follow the state-wide **Mandatory Policy [0049/17](#)** and **Clinical Guidelines for Women Requesting Immersion in Water for Pain Management During Labour and / or Birth**. Go directly to the [state-wide guideline \(PDF 470KB\)](#) for water birth guidance.

KEMH and CMP specific requirements:

- For consumer information , see: WNHS Pregnancy, Birth and your Baby book and brochure [Labour and/or Birth Using Water \(PDF 977KB\)](#) (2016)

- If the woman is bringing in her own birth pool the KEMH Labour & Birth Suite rooms deemed suitable for water birth:

Suitability	Room number
MOST suitable	1, 8 and 12
Suitable	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 13 and 14
Unsuitable	7, 9, 10, 15 and 16

- All rooms in the FBC are suitable for inflatable pools and these are provided.

Preparation

Antenatal discussion regarding water birth assists in informed decision making for healthy women enquiring about this option.

For those women who are considered healthy and with a low risk pregnancy who have chosen water for labour and/or birth the midwife and/or doctor are to discuss and arrange the following in the antenatal period:

1. Any reasons why immersion in water is not advised for the woman (see inclusion criteria on state-wide policy)
2. Benefits and risks to the woman and neonate
3. That a midwife competent in water birth needs to be available at the time of birth
4. Equipment that the woman will need to hire/purchase for water birth at KEMH (excluding FBC):
 - a. If women are using the bath(s) on Labour & Birth Suite they will be required to bring in a debris net.
 - b. If women are hiring or purchasing an inflatable birth pool, hoses; tap fittings; debris net; mirror are available through a number of external suppliers. It is strongly recommended that by 37 weeks pregnancy, the woman and/or her partner arrange a time to ensure equipment is compatible with hospital taps. Arrange with Clinical Midwifery Consultant (CMC) of Labour & Birth Suite.
5. Complete an agreement form
6. For women planning a home birth with CMP the client and her support person must be informed of their responsibility and accountability in relation to obtaining all the equipment required for water birthing, ensuring that it is safe and in working order and have made themselves aware of appropriate disposal.

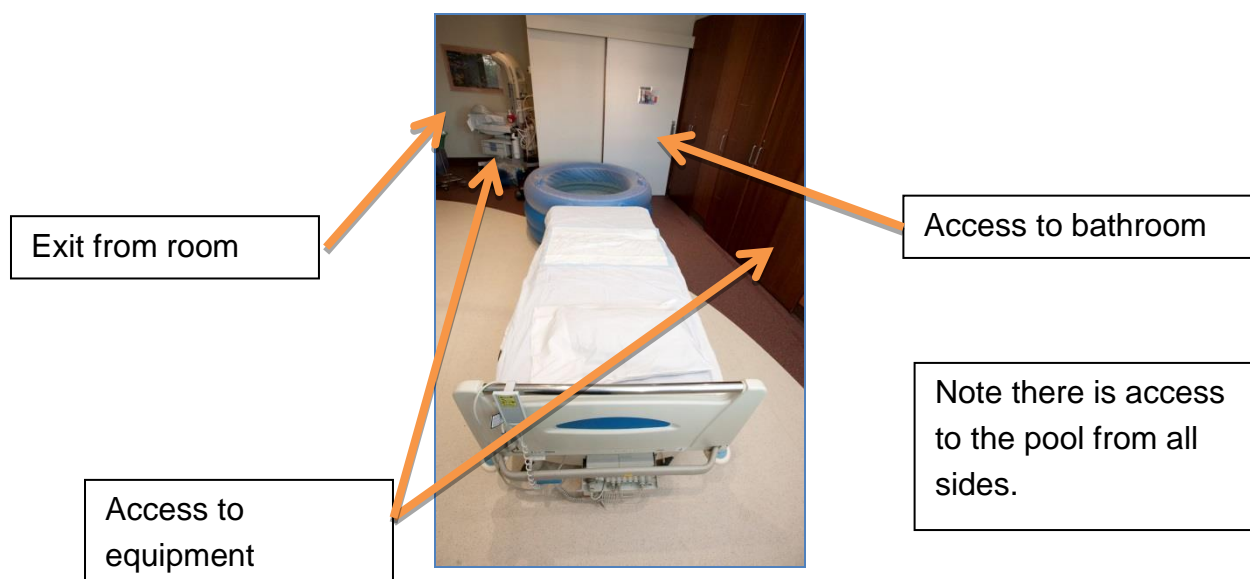
Evacuation procedure: Labour/ birth in water

CMP: Note – Evacuation procedure for labour and birth at home is found in the CMP procedure manual on the W drive.

Key points

1. The Evacuation Pod must be in the room of the woman labouring and/birthing in water.
2. Where possible use 'minimal handling' to protect both the woman and the staff when using the Evacuation Pod. These include:
 - The midwife's posture should be held in a position to maintain the normal curves of the spine.
 - It is important to prevent forward bending, twisting or overreaching when caring for a woman in the pool/bath. Avoid leaning for prolonged periods.
 - Reduce the need for repetitive or sustained awkward procedures/postures.
 - Reduce the need for sustained movements or application of force.
 - Ensure that when handling a load it is stable and balanced before performing a task.
 - Do not handle loads which are difficult to grasp or hold. Use an appropriate device.
3. Non slip mats, towels or other linen should be on the floor surrounding the pool/bath to reduce OSH risk (slips). Attend to any water spillage to minimise slipping.
4. If woman wishes to labour and birth in an inflatable birth pool it is preferable that she not be allocated to rooms 7, 9, 10 and 16 on LBS.
5. Ideal accessibility is being able to gain access on all sides (or at least two sides) of the pool/bath.
6. The inflatable pool must be situated in the room to allow for access to all equipment, the bathroom, the placement of bed alongside the bath and the route to evacuate the room (as necessary).

Placement of the pool in the room



Evacuation of an unconscious woman from the pool/bath

1. Press the assist bell.
2. Maintain the woman's airway in the pool.
3. Provide clinical handover to responders.
4. Place bed/trolley alongside pool at the height of the pool.



Bed level with bath

Instructions for use of the evacuation pod

- Unroll the Evacuation Pod, keep the mesh side up and unclip the belts.
- Push the pod down in the water and under the woman, ensuring the woman's head is at the V end and the foot straps are in the appropriate position. This may require the person attending to step into the pool.
- The woman should be lying centrally on the pod.
- Secure the straps at the chest and knees and adjust the belts firmly.
- To remove the woman from the pool there must be 2 people at either side. During the lift the person maintaining the airway may have to release the woman head and then, immediately once transferred, establish the airway again.
- Complete the transfer from the pool to the bed/trolley. Transfer needs to be in 3 stages:
 - 1st stage – positioning the woman within the pod, while moving the pod to the edge of the pool/bath
 - 2nd stage – lift the woman so that her buttocks are on pool edge / end of the bed
 - 3rd stage – transfer the woman up the bed

Important notes

- Regularly check the stitching on the pod.
- In the rare event of the Evacuation Pod being used for purposes other than training, it is to be disposed of and then replaced.
- Consider if a slide sheet should be placed on bed (this will minimise water soakage of bed, as pod will be very wet).
- Linen may be heavy when wet, only half fill linen bags to minimise OSH lifting risk.

Documentation

- Document events in the MR250 (Progress Notes) or CMP MR08
- Complete a Clinical Incident Form.

Related policies

WA Health MP 0049/17: [Women requesting immersion in water for pain management during labour and/or birth policy](#) including [clinical guideline](#)

Related WNHS policies, procedures and guidelines

Clinical Guidelines, Obstetrics & Gynaecology: Labour & Birth
CMP Procedure Manual- Evacuation in Water section

Other resources or related forms



Forms:

- MR 250 Progress Notes
- CMP MR 08

Patient brochures:

- KEMH [Labour and/or Birth Using Water \(PDF 977KB\)](#) brochure (2016)
- WNHS [Pregnancy, Birth and your Baby \(PDF 5.93MB\)](#) book

Water for pain management during labour and/or birth

Keywords:	Evacuation in water birth, water birth pod, birth in water, immersion in water, inflatable birth pool, labour in water, non-pharmacological pain relief, waterbirth, water birth		
Document owner:	Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Imaging Directorate		
Author / Reviewer:	Clinical Midwifery Consultants: Labour and Birth Suite & FBC/ CMP		
Date first issued:	August 2010 [Water birth]	Version:	6.0
Reviewed dates:	Mar 2014; Feb 2015 (amend); May 2016; Oct 2018; June 2019	Next review date:	June 2022
Supersedes:	<p>History: In October 2018 amalgamated content from three individual guidelines on water birth dating from October 2008 into this water birth procedure document.</p> <p>Supersedes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water for Pain Management During Labour and/or Birth (version dated Oct 2018) <p>Previous versions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Water Birth & Labouring in Water (version dated May 2016) 3. Evacuation Procedure: Labour and Birth in Water (version dated Sept 2016) 4. Community Midwifery Program: Labour and Birth in Water: Midwifery Care (version dated Sept 2014) 		
Endorsed by:	MSMSC	Date:	June 2019
NSQHS Standards (v2) applicable:	1  Governance, 8  Recognising & Responding to Acute Deterioration		
<p>Printed or personally saved electronic copies of this document are considered uncontrolled.</p> <p>Access the current version from the WNHS website.</p>			