

Good News for Moms, UC San Diego Medical Center Opens New Labor and Delivery Suites

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UC San Diego Medical Center-Hillcrest has opened five new state-of-the-art labor and delivery suites for moms-to-be. Spacious and well-appointed, the rooms offer a private and relaxing environment for the entire family to welcome their newest addition. A nationally recognized center of excellence for both low- and high-risk pregnancies, the expanded unit offers the highest level of care available to approximately 3,000 newborns every year.

“We are thrilled to offer families a new, modernized environment to match our forward-thinking model of care for women in labor,” said Thomas Moore, MD, professor and chairman of the Department of Reproductive Medicine at UC San Diego Medical Center. “UC San Diego Medical Center is the only hospital in the region where parents can access university-level care, an extraordinary combination of personal attention, knowledge, technology and resources to aid every kind of birth.”

The expansion of the labor and delivery program is, in part, to accommodate a growing need for the advanced care of complicated pregnancies in the county. Moore cites advanced artificial reproductive technologies and shifts in maternal age as reasons for the increasing numbers of premature and multiples births in the region. In 2008, more than 20 percent of mothers having triplet or larger births were delivered at UC San Diego Medical Center; more than 20 percent of the county’s very low birth weight babies were also delivered here.

Because of its expertise in fetal care, genetics, minimally invasive in-utero fetal surgery, and radiology, UC San Diego Medical Center receives referrals from throughout the region to care for moms experiencing a high-risk pregnancy. Conditions such as obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease may complicate a pregnancy, requiring a multidisciplinary approach to care.

“This expansion is just a small window into the future of what UC San Diego Medical Center can provide to all women in the community,” said Linda Levy, RN, director of women and infants services at UC San Diego. “Whether a woman is seeking natural childbirth with a midwife and

doula, or is in need of specialty care for multiples, such as fetal surgery, we can deliver a full range of comprehensive services.”


Moms may choose from a variety of options to prepare for their birth including convenient prenatal and perinatal care. During their hospital stay, around the clock care is provided by a diverse team including obstetricians, perinatologists, nurses, midwives, doulas, lactation consultants, nutritionists, social workers, and other specialists.

If an infant requires specialized care after birth, the child may be transferred to the hospital’s neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). UC San Diego Medical Center is the only hospital in San Diego to have both a regional NICU and a labor and delivery service in the same facility. The NICU cares for babies who are delivered before 32 weeks gestation, or who have serious illnesses or abnormalities requiring intensive care. The NICU recently expanded to 49 beds, caring for more than 900 infants per year.

“We share a common philosophy of family-centered, woman-centered care at UC San Diego Medical Center,” said Karen Perdion, director of the UCSD Midwifery Program. “This means that you are the most important person when it comes to making decisions and choosing what is best for you.”

In addition to the new labor and delivery suites, UC San Diego Medical Center offers the only in-hospital midwifery birth center in Southern California. In the last ten years, the midwives have attended more than 7,500 births, representing one-third of the hospital’s births. The midwife team boasts a primary Cesarean section rate of nine percent compared to the national average of 18 to 20 percent.

UCSD Medical Center was accredited as a Baby Friendly Hospital in 2006; one of a handful of academic hospitals to achieve this prestigious award. The hospital also offers an innovative nutritional program for premature infants called Supporting Premature Infant Nutrition. The program ensures that premature infants receive human milk. Early studies show that when these babies are fed human milk they experience fewer infections and are more likely to go home sooner.

To schedule a tour at UC San Diego Medical Center-Hillcrest, please call 800-926-8273 or take a virtual tour at <http://www.emilive.com/portals/147/tour/1915/3.html> 

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