Glencoe Regional Health Services is pleased to offer water birth as an option for labor and delivery.

Water birth is a safe approach to childbirth that has been practiced in many other countries for more than 30 years and is gaining in popularity in the United States.

If, after reviewing this brochure, you are interested in laboring or giving birth in water, please discuss your interest with your regular obstetrics provider at your next prenatal appointment. He or she can determine if you are a good candidate for water birth and review the option in more detail for you.

Water birth is not the right choice for all situations, so it's important to talk to your provider early and throughout your pregnancy to ensure it is a good option for you.

Glencoe Regional Health Services

1805 Hennepin Avenue North
Glencoe, MN 55336
grhsonline.org/birth-center

Glencoe Regional Health Services offers you quality, convenience and personal care.

Our staff includes physicians, physician assistants, nurse midwives and nurse practitioners who practice emergency medicine, family medicine, general surgery, hematology and oncology, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, orthopedics, pediatrics, podiatry and urology.

Our campus in Glencoe features:

- Our largest outpatient clinic
- A 25-bed critical access hospital with modern birth center and transitional care unit
- A Level III trauma center ER and walk-in urgent care center
- A 110-bed long term care facility

We also have clinics in Lester Prairie and Stewart.

Hablas español?
Tenemos intérpretes de español para ayudarle.

Glencoe Regional Health Services
What are the benefits of water birth?
In a water birth, you will labor in a jetted tub. As the time for pushing nears, you will move from the tub to a water birth pool, which provides more space and deeper water. Your buoyancy in the water will help you to feel lighter, allowing you to change positions more easily and get better rest between contractions.

Much like the soothing effect of a warm bath, being submerged in warm water can bring a sense of calm and relaxation to a woman in labor. It can decrease pain perception and anxiety, leading to the release of natural oxytocin, which boosts labor. The warm water also provides softening and increased circulation of the skin and muscles of the woman’s perineum during birth. This promotes stretching and might result in less tearing or trauma.

You may deliver outside the water birth pool if you choose, but usually the baby is born in the water. Some believe this provides a more gentle transition for the newborn.

What are the possible risks?
According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the safety and efficacy of underwater birth for the newborn has not been established.

Your immersion in the pool could make it more difficult for your provider to manage an emergency during delivery, such as difficulty delivering your baby’s shoulders or unwrapping the umbilical cord if it is wrapped around the baby’s neck.

There also is a risk that your baby will inhale water. While this is a risk, babies have a protective mechanism that prevents them from breathing during the few seconds it takes to bring them to the surface of the water after they are born.

Who will deliver my baby?
You can learn more about water birth from your regular obstetrics provider. He or she will help you make arrangements and monitor your pregnancy to ensure that water birth is still a good option for you when it comes time for you to deliver.

Our certified nurse midwives – Laurel McKeever, CNM, and Michelle Quale, CNM, FNP-BC – have special training and experience in water birth and will attend most water births at GRHS. If your regular obstetrics provider does not attend water births, he or she will partner with a certified nurse midwife to ensure you receive the best care in your preferred childbirth setting.

If complications develop and you need a C-section or other intervention, a physician is always available to ensure your safety and that of your baby.

Can I have pain medication?
It is not safe for women who are laboring in water to receive pain medications. If you are planning to receive an epidural or intravenous pain medication, you should not elect a water birth. If you decide while laboring in water that you want to receive pain medication, you will exit the water and give birth in a bed.

Can my partner participate?
If you choose, your partner may sit in the birthing pool with you to support you as you push. The physical closeness of the water birth experience can be very special for new parents.

How can I arrange for a water birth?
If you would like to plan a water birth, talk to your OB provider. We will review additional information with you, ask you to sign a consent form and screen you for infections that could be dangerous to your baby and the hospital staff during a water birth.