Benefits of normal vaginal birth:

- Babies born normally are usually born when they are ready
- As the baby passes through the birth canal during normal birth their blood circulation system is stimulated which helps them to be ready for birth
- Babies born normally have a considerably lower risk of breathing problems
- Skin-to-skin contact between the mother and baby can occur easily after a normal birth
- Babies born normally receive probiotic bacteria which helps develop a balanced immune system, helping to protect the baby from disease throughout childhood
- A baby born normally shows more interest in breastfeeding and feeds for longer in the time just after birth
- The recovery from a normal birth is usually very quick, meaning if the birth was in a hospital the mother can go home soon after the birth

Every woman’s pregnancy and birth is unique and we want to help you have a safe and happy experience. Our services will always listen to your views and any concerns you might have but most women and their babies are fit and healthy and where possible we will advise you to plan for a normal birth.

If you want to find out more about normal birth or breastfeeding, talk to your midwife or contact your local National Childbirth Trust (NCT):

www.nct.org.uk

The views in this leaflet are supported by professional groups including the Royal College of Midwives, the Royal College or Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and the National Institute for Clinical Excellence.
For most women and their partners, having a baby is an exciting and wonderful time but it can be a little worrying if you are not sure what type of birth would be best for you and your baby.

Here in Northamptonshire we believe that most healthy women can have a normal vaginal birth.

Research is uncovering more and more benefits of normal vaginal birth for both mother and baby, proving that nature’s way is still best. Most women would prefer a normal birth and most would prefer a normal labour.

Our Maternity Services provide high quality safe care for you and your baby throughout pregnancy and birth. This includes providing support and encouragement for normal childbirth.

You might also want to discuss whether you would like to have your baby in the comfort of your own home rather than in a hospital. Of course if you choose a home birth and anything changes so that delivering in hospital would be safer for you then this can be arranged at any point.

Caesarean birth involves major surgery and there are risks involved. Sometimes the benefits of the caesarean will outweigh the risks; however for most women the benefits of a normal birth are far greater.

Your midwife or doctor will only advise a caesarean section and advise against a normal birth if there is a specific clinical need. There are a number of reasons why this might be the case and this will be discussed with you during the pregnancy and when you come to give birth.

Just because you had a caesarean section for one baby does not mean it will be necessary for future births. Your doctor or midwife will talk to you after you have had a caesarean birth about why this was necessary and advise whether you will be able to have a normal birth in the future.

Breastfeeding

We believe that breastfeeding is the healthiest choice for you and your baby.

Our midwifery teams will discuss breastfeeding with you during your pregnancy so that you understand how breastfeeding works and feel prepared when your baby is born. They will support you in the early days of feeding, after which your Health Visitor will be able to offer you support. Your midwife or Health Visitor will also be able to tell you about breast feeding help in your local community.

Make contact with your midwife as early in your pregnancy as possible so that you can make plans for your antenatal care and birth. We will be happy to include your partner or a family member or friend in the discussions.