

Evans lets moms to be soak it up during labor

By Jeff Troth MEDDAC PAO



The Mountain Post Birthing Center at Evans Army Community Hospital has a new way to help moms before they deliver their babies without the use of drugs. Starting in July, the hospital began water labor for mothers-to-be who are looking for a drug-free birthing experience.

“My goal was to do natural child birth with no epidural or narcotics,” said Brynn Sims, who gave birth to her son James Aug. 12, after using a water tub during labor. “It absolutely helped and I don’t think I could have done it without drugs and without water.”

“We have 12 midwives on staff here and they are the driving force behind the,” said Capt. Lynnette Murray, head nurse of the Mountain Post Birthing Center. She said that Evans is one of only 4 military hospitals that provide water labor.

Murray also said studies have shown a decrease in pain during water labor because the water has buoyancy. This allows the weight of the belly to float, reducing pain and making labor easier.

“It was really relaxing,” said Sims. “You are covered with warm water to the chest and there is a weightlessness to it, which makes it much more relaxing and takes away the pain without losing the ability to move and know what is going on.”

The water tubs allow the dad to be more involved during labor. He is able to be right next to the tub and rub her back or spray her with warm water.

Not all pregnant women giving birth at Evans qualify to use the water labor tubs.

“To make it as safe as possible water labor is only available to those who are having a low risk pregnancy,” said Murray. “The criteria is very strict, but if someone is interested in it, she should engage her obstetrician as early as possible.”

Only women with a healthy pregnancy free of complications are considered for water labor. A few things that can un-qualify a mom-to-be from using the water labor tubs are: an infection or excessive bleeding; any pregnancy-related complications such as preeclampsia or bacteria in the bloodstream; and if birth is before the pregnancy reaches full term.

“We had one patient who wanted to do water labor, but when she came in she wasn’t able to use the tub,” Murray said. “Our number one concern is the safety of the mother and baby.”

The tubs were purchased two years ago, but the plumbing in the hospital (which was built in the early 1980s) could not accommodate the amount of water drained from the tubs during an emergency.

“The piping in the rooms weren’t adequate so we had pipes replaced in 3 of our 9 labor rooms,” Murray said. “This had to be done in order to be able to drain the water from chest level down in less than 90 seconds so we can open the door on the tub.”

Four mothers-to-be have used the water labor tubs at Evans with positive results.

“For those who want to give birth without medications,” Sims said. “I would definitely recommend using the water tubs.”



Capt. Lynnette Murray, the clinical nurse in charge of the Mountain Post Birthing Center, wheels one of the hospital’s 145-gallon water labor tubs into a labor and delivery room at Evans Army Community Hospital. (Photo by Jeff Troth MEDDAC PAO)



Capt. Lynnette Murray, the clinical nurse in charge of the Mountain Post Birthing Center, hooks water hoses from the room’s sink to a 145-gallon water labor tub in a labor and delivery room at Evans Army Community Hospital. (Photo by Jeff Troth MEDDAC PAO)