

moms miami

A Touch of Spa in Maternity Ward

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Today moms-to-be are not only looking for the best doctors and safest hospitals to deliver their precious babies. Modern moms want the comforts of home – or even a spa-like experience – that is forcing hospitals to turn sterile maternity wards into country club settings.

"Now women are wanting the experience to be as comfortable and inviting as possible, and we're right there with them," said Ginny Kline-Kaye, director of nursing for Women's Services at [Memorial Regional Hospital](#) in Hollywood.

Private Suites

Think luxury linens, rooms with a view, and charming furnishings. A private room is the No. 1 request of moms shopping around for a birthing center, Kline-Kaye said.

Until August 2010, Memorial Regional had only one private room, she said. Now the hospital, which has delivered babies for 54 years, is undergoing a renovation that will expand its birthing center to 53 beds, 39 of which will be private. The project is expected to be completed this month. Its affiliate, Memorial Hospital Miramar, has 36 private rooms, and Memorial Hospital West in Pembroke Pines has 40 private rooms.

Private suites include a separate lounge area, with a sleeper sofa and a small dining table. Photos by renowned baby photographer Anne Geddes decorate the walls, which are bathed in warm colors and accented with dark woods. There are two phones in the suite, and all medical equipment is hidden in cabinetry.

"We've gotten away from the sterile hospital look and have become more residential," Kline-Kaye said.

[Plantation General Hospital](#) in Plantation, which has offered maternity services since 1966, also recently renovated its maternity unit, with nine private delivery rooms housing new birthing beds and central monitoring, 14 semi-private postpartum rooms and nine private rooms, including two suites.

[North Shore Medical Center](#) in Miami has 12 private rooms and six semi-private rooms. Private rooms have hardwood floors, flat-screen TVs and refrigerators.

"We wanted moms to feel like when they're here, they're in their own homes, so when family comes to visit, it's not so clinical," said Vicki Vertich, maternal family health manager.

[Baptist Hospital](#) in Miami offers 34 private rooms that can be expanded to 40, if overflow space is needed. Moms can use "Stork Inn" and stay in the hospital, space permitted, if the baby needs to stay a couple of extra days.

[South Miami Hospital](#) has 42 private rooms that have been remodeled with hardwood floors, rockers and double-wide pullout couches for a "hotel kind of feel," said Kim Zimmerman, director of obstetrics. "The moms really like larger rooms that can accommodate their whole family."

Delivery Services

More hospitals are catering to the birth plans of new age moms, allowing them to bring their doula, birthing ball or other natural aids. Some are remodeling to add luxurious birthing amenities. Baptist Hospital in Miami offers Jacuzzis in two labor and delivery rooms that can be incorporated into the birthing experience. The hospital has one midwife and is looking to add another, said Nancy Savino, director of obstetrics and women's services.

Fine Dining

Lobster and steak are two of the choices on the special menu for maternity patients at Memorial Regional in Hollywood, which is offered to dads and guests of the new mom. At North Shore, a celebration dinner, including a birthday cake and sparkling cider, is offered to parents after the birth. "We encourage them to invite the other siblings to celebrate," Vertich said.

Baptist in Miami offers a regular menu, plus a la carte items that are "more fun than the food we have downstairs," Savino said. Plantation General Hospital offers an "at your service" menu from which moms and guests can order all day. South Miami offers a special menu for obstetrics patients that includes Caesar salads, pasta and sandwiches. They also accommodate special requests for food from different cultures, Zimmerman said.

Concierge Services

Loved ones of new moms will soon be able to arrange gift baskets of pampering amenities such as plush robes and towels and relaxing lotions and candles through a concierge service that Memorial Regional is putting together, Kline-Kaye said.

"If you had a friend going to have a baby, you could do something special and have it waiting in their hospital room," she said.

Baptist Hospital is working on a concierge room concept to debut in the fall, Savino said. The concierge rooms will be larger, with luxury amenities and a staff person assigned to help parents with services and special requests. "It's a VIP concept that's still under development," she said.

North Shore offers a boutique of lactation supplies and new mom needs, along with free consults.

High-Tech Touches

Flat-screen TVs, DVD players and free wi-fi are becoming standard in maternity care. Memorial Regional and South Miami have an in-house educational channel with videos on parenting topics such as breastfeeding and infant safety.

Moms are blogging about their high-risk pregnancies, Tweeting updates as their labor progresses and updating their Facebook status with the newborn's photo minutes after birth, and hospitals are working to accommodate those desires.

"As fast as a baby is born, the grandparents are seeing pictures on their cellphones," Kline-Kaye said.

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