

**Dear friends and family:**

Welcome! Your visit reflects a loving community of support, which is important to every new family. We would like to offer some ideas on ways that you can help the new family.

**At the hospital:**

- A telephone call before a visit in the hospital is appreciated.
- Consider delaying your visit until the family is home from the hospital. If you do visit, consider keeping your visit brief, about 15 minutes. This has several benefits: new parents will be less exhausted, nurses can spend more time teaching infant care and babies can be fed when hungry. Feeding is a learning experience for both baby and mother and can be difficult in a room full of people.
- Ask the new family how you can help when they return home. Parents have told us that the following things really helped them in the first month:
  - Bring over a few meals that can go from freezer to oven.
  - Offer to drop by to do a few household tasks, such as laundry, grocery shopping, lawn mowing or housecleaning.
  - If there are other children in the family, offer to take care of the other children for a few hours.

**At home, allow time for parents to settle into their new roles. Keep in mind they are often awake at night.**

- A telephone call before a visit is appreciated. Telephone new parents between the hours of 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.
- Continue to keep visits and phone calls brief while the new family settles in.
- Ask how the parents are doing, as well as how the new baby is doing.
- Offer lots of words of praise for the good job they are doing. All new parents need support in the hard work of taking care of their baby.
- Stress to parents that this is their special time to “be taken care of” by others; they should not have to care for anyone but the baby and their family.
- It is usually best to offer advice only when asked for advice. New parents get so much advice they often feel overwhelmed. Support them as they learn about their role and this new and unique baby. They will really appreciate knowing you support their decisions about how they care for their baby.
- If concerns are expressed about the health of mom or baby, encourage the parents to call their doctor or midwife for guidance.
- After a month, offer to come over to watch the baby for an hour or two while the new parents go out.

We hope these suggestions have been helpful to you. We are glad you came to visit! All new parents need to know others care about their new family.

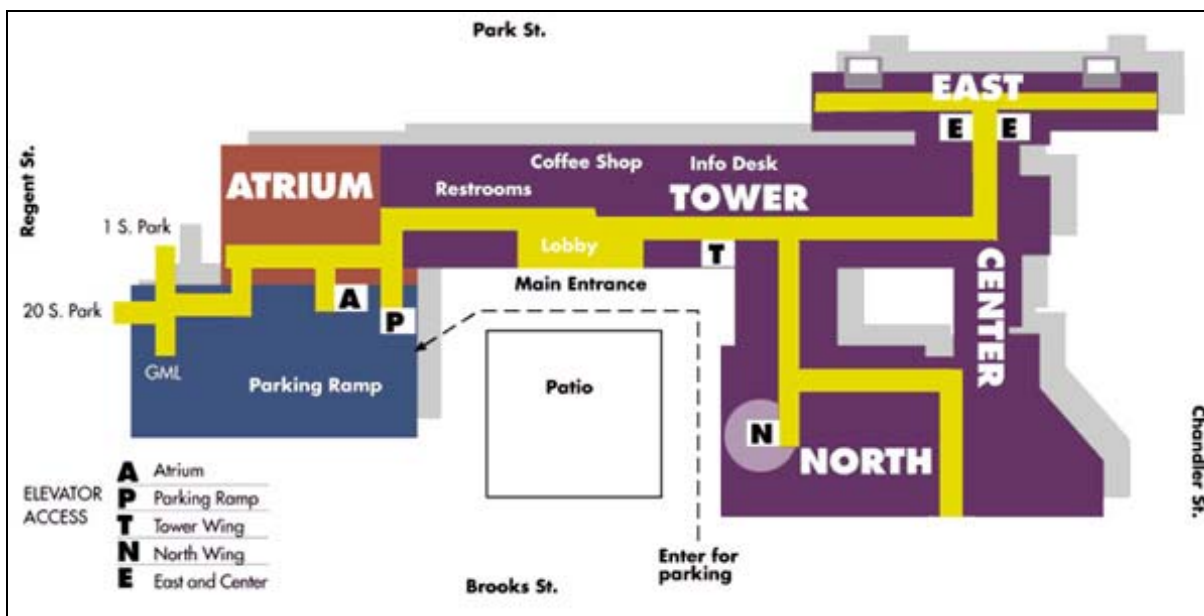
**The Birthing Center Staff**

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## Visiting the Meriter Birthing Center

The Birthing Center is located on the fourth, fifth and sixth floors of the north wing. (Circled on the map.) To visit the Birthing Center, park in the parking ramp, walk through the lobby and take the north elevators to the appropriate floor. Please note there is a small fee for parking, and that driving directions to Meriter Hospital are available on [www.meriter.com](http://www.meriter.com). Also:

- Children under age 12 must check in at a Birthing Center nursing station.
- We recommend that you do not visit if you have a cold and/or flu-like symptoms.
- We recommend that you wash your hands with soap and water before holding the baby.



## Visiting After-Hours

If you need to visit between the hours of 8 p.m. – 6 a.m., please note that the lobby doors are locked. You will need to enter through Emergency Services in the Atrium. Security will sign you in and direct you to the Birthing Center. All visitors (including significant others) remaining at Meriter from 8 p.m. - 7 a.m. are required to have a “visitor pass.” To obtain a pass:

1. Go to a Birthing Center nursing station, where we will issue you a pass.
2. Wear the pass in an easily seen location at all times while at Meriter (outside of visiting hours).
3. This pass needs to be replaced every 24 hours.

## Visitor Snacks and Meals

The following food options are available for visitors. Visitors are also welcome to ice water and coffee from the Family Kitchen, but should not take other items as these are for laboring mothers.

- **Cafeteria** – Located on Level 1. It is open from 6:30 a.m. – 7 p.m., seven days a week.
- **Coffee Shop** – Located in the lobby. It is open on weekdays with limited hours on weekends.
- **Vending Machines** – The machines are located on Level 1.

## Smoking

Meriter Hospital has adopted a smoke-free policy to provide a safe and healthy environment for patients, visitors and staff. If you choose to smoke, please ask where the nearest smoking shelter is located.

## Visitor Restrooms

**4 North** – The restroom is located on the west hallway across from room 478.

**5 North** – The restroom is located on the west hallway across from room 578.

**6 North** – The restroom is located down the 6 Center hallway.