



# Guide to Maternity Services in Qatar





# Guide to Maternity Services in Qatar

As Qatar's population continues to grow and its demography changing, likewise is our plan at Hamad Medical Corporation to transform the country's healthcare landscape, especially in ensuring continuous provision of state-of-the-art maternity healthcare services to all women in Qatar and the region.

Providing high-quality healthcare delivered by top clinicians working to international standards and best practice, all HMC's maternity services, offered at Women's Wellness and Research Center, The Cuban Hospital, Al Khor Hospital, Al Wakra Hospital and Sidra Medicine, are top notch and women in Qatar have many choices of where they could have their babies closer to their homes.

This guide to maternity services in Qatar offers you a clear and comprehensive overview of how to access maternity services across all HMC's maternity hospitals, Primary Health Care Corporation, Sidra Medicine and other private sector hospitals. The information in this guide is useful for all pregnant women (and their spouses as well as other family members) as it clarifies the healthcare pathway for them at all maternity hospitals in Qatar starting off from the primary health care.





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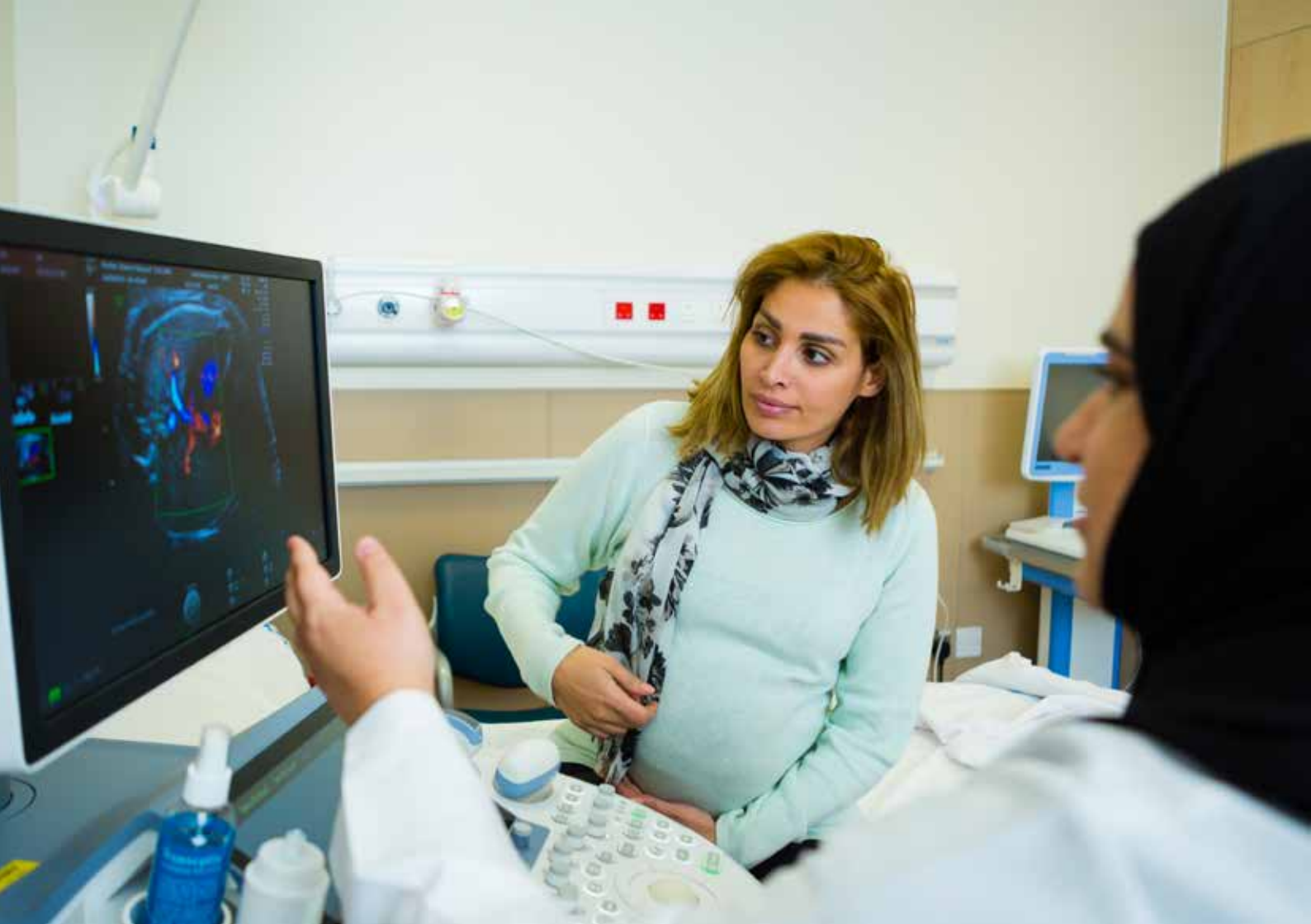
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## Who provides maternity services in Qatar?

Hamad Medical Corporation is the leading public healthcare provider in the State of Qatar. The Corporation offers high quality family-centered maternity care to all women in the country at its four maternity hospitals - Women's Wellness and Research Center, The Cuban Hospital, Al Khor Hospital and Al Wakra Hospital. All the hospitals have Women's Urgent Care and Obstetric Triage services.

Women in Qatar also have the options to access maternity care offered by the private sector hospitals including Sidra Medicine.

As the first point of contact for women once they become pregnant, the Primary Health Care Corporation offers a broad range of antenatal care services across all its health centers to women in their first and second trimesters. However, private hospitals offer services to women from the beginning of their pregnancy until delivery.



### PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CORPORATION (PHCC)

#### About Primary Health Care Corporation

Primary Health Care Corporation operates 28 health centers across Qatar, delivering community-based primary care services to Qatar's population in all parts of the country. These primary health centers provide a wide range of preventive, diagnostic and treatment healthcare services, including dental, antenatal care, post-natal care including home visits, family planning programs, diet and nutrition counselling, immunization, pharmacy, lab, ophthalmology, audiology, radiology and wellness services.





## What antenatal services are available at PHCC?

When you visit a health center, your family physician will conduct an initial pregnancy test followed by an antenatal package which includes all the needed initial lab investigations and ultrasound screening and appointment for the follow up visit.

A primary health care physician can also request ultrasound checks and fetal heart monitoring for you during your visits. PHCC holds weekly antenatal classes to provide vital education to expectant mums about their health in pregnancy and after delivery.



## How you can contact the Primary Health Care Corporation?

You can contact the PHCC by calling their customer service team, Hayyak on 107 for all your primary health care needs. PHCC is sending SMS to all post-natal mothers with the contact number of Maternal and Child Health Counsellors.

## Primary health care centers as your first point of call

The PHCC offers high quality antenatal care to all pregnant women in Qatar throughout their first and second trimester making sure the baby and the mother are doing fine.

PHCC physicians are well trained to look after pregnant women at the Antenatal Clinics spread across all the primary health centers in the country. If your primary care doctor determines that you need more specialized care, which is not available at the primary health centers or your pregnancy has reached 28 weeks or above, they will refer you to any of HMC's maternity hospitals.



### **How can you book an appointment at a primary health center?**

You can book an appointment by calling the customer service team, Hayyak on 107 or by walking into your nearest health center to directly book your appointment. Every woman availing maternity care at the PHC will need to provide a health card, a sponsor's letter, QID or passport, residential building number, copy of a marriage certificate or other proof of marriage document as well as husband's QID or passport.



### **Do you have to pay for services at primary health centers?**

All Qatar residents with valid health cards are entitled to subsidized consultations and prescriptions at the PHCC. Without valid health card, you will be charged higher fees for services. Some emergency medical services are provided free of charge. Please note that all payments are made with a credit, debit or e-cash (QNB) card.

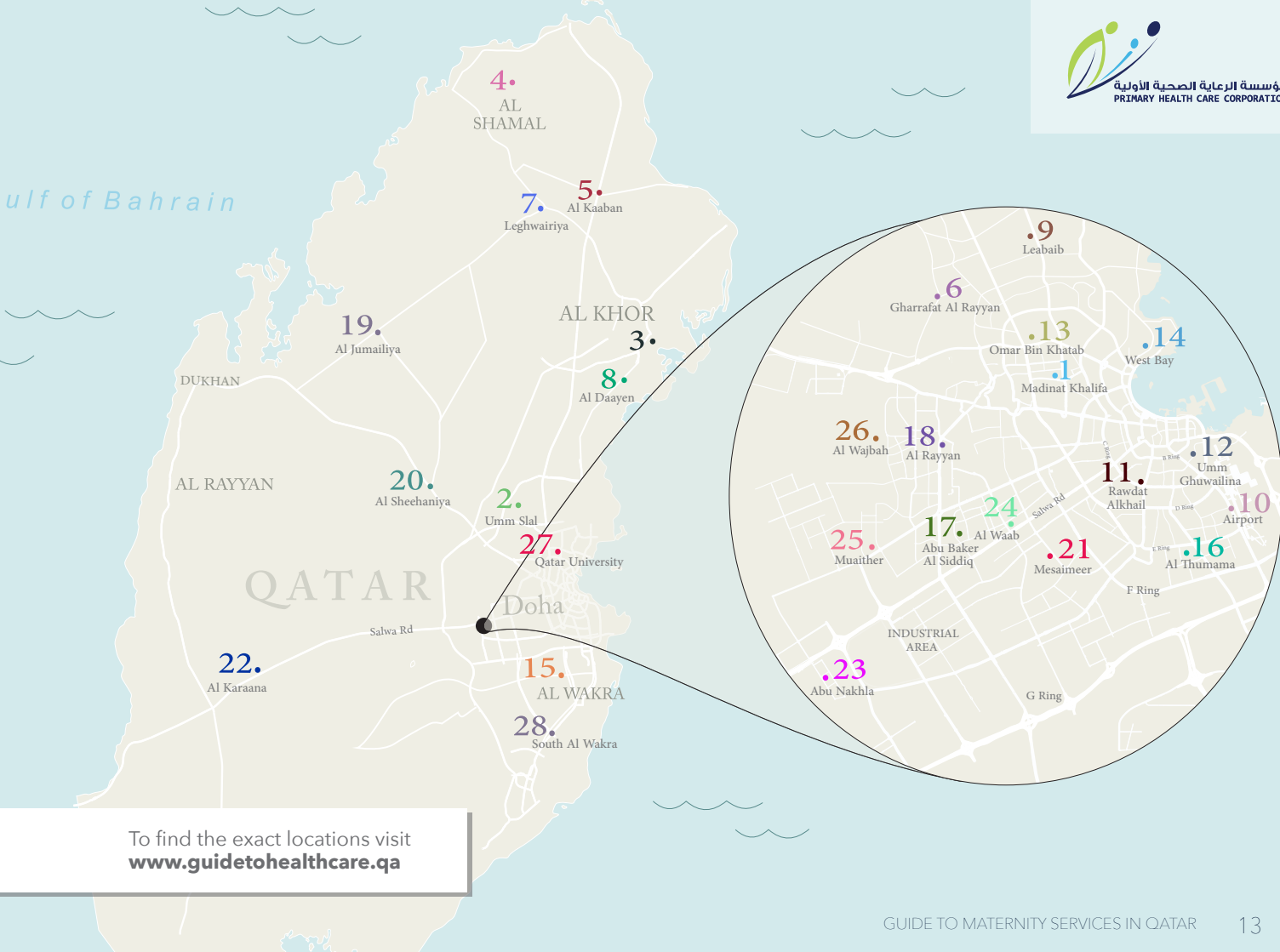




## Where are primary health centers located?

There are currently 28 primary health care centers spread across the country and you are registered at the one most nearby to your home for easy access and for your convenience.

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Madinat Khalifa     | 17. Abu Baker Al Siddiq |
| 2. Umm Slal            | 18. Al Rayyan           |
| 3. Al Khor             | 19. Al Jumiliya         |
| 4. Al Shamal           | 20. Al Sheehaniya       |
| 5. Al Kaaban           | 21. Mesaimmer           |
| 6. Gharrafat Al Rayyan | 22. Al Karaana          |
| 7. Leghwairiya         | 23. Abu Nakhla          |
| 8. Al Daayen           | 24. Al Waab             |
| 9. Leabaib             | 25. Muaither            |
| 10. Airport            | 26. Al Wajba            |
| 11. Rawdat Alkhail     | 27. Qatar University    |
| 12. Umm Ghuwailina     | 28. South Al Wakra      |
| 13. Omar Bin Khatab    |                         |
| 14. West Bay           |                         |
| 15. Al Wakra           |                         |
| 16. Al Thumama         |                         |



To find the exact locations visit  
[www.guidetohealthcare.qa](http://www.guidetohealthcare.qa)



## **Tertiary and general maternity care facilities in Qatar**

Being the leading public healthcare facility in Qatar, Hamad Medical Corporation is committed to providing cutting-edge specialized tertiary care to all patients in need of rehabilitation, long term and lifelong care, including pregnancy and newborn care. All HMC's tertiary and general maternity hospitals have been designed to address the specific healthcare needs of women throughout all stages of their lives. By following international best practices, HMC is committed to providing women with unrivaled, high-quality care by a multidisciplinary team, who are qualified in women's health.

HMC has one tertiary level maternity hospital - Women's Wellness and Research Center and three general maternity hospitals - Al Khor Hospital, Al Wakra Hospital and The Cuban Hospital - catering to all reproductive needs of women across the country. These maternity facilities receive pregnant women in their third trimester from the PHCC (according to whether their pregnancy is progressing normally or is classified as high-risk) to continue their antenatal care until they safely deliver.

Seeking to provide evidence-based care (including high quality maternity care), all HMC hospitals, including the maternity hospitals, are Academic Health Centers as the corporation is evolving into a thriving Academic Health System that links together health, education and research, powered by the synergies between itself and its academic partners including Weill Cornell Medicine, Qatar University, the University of Calgary - Qatar, College of the North Atlantic - Qatar, Sidra Medicine, and Primary Health Care Corporation.

Committed to delivering the safest, most effective and most compassionate care to each and every one of its patients, HMC has achieved the significant distinction of becoming the first healthcare system across the globe to have all its hospitals accredited by Joint Commission International (JCI) under the Academic Medical Center accreditation program. HMC is also the first hospital system in the Middle East to achieve institutional accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) International LLC, which demonstrates excellence in the way medical graduates are trained through residency, internship and fellowship programs.



## Get to know the tertiary hospital



### About Women's Wellness and Research Center (WWRC)

Women's Wellness and Research Center is the largest women's tertiary hospital in the country dedicated to delivering family-centered care to women and newborns. The hospital, opened in 2018, is equipped with a large Emergency Department with an expanded visitor waiting area, seven Operating Theatres, 26 Labor and Delivery rooms, over 240 inpatient rooms with bathrooms and a number of specialized outpatient clinics for Obstetrics and Gynecology. In addition, it has more than 100 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit cots for the care of critically ill newborns.

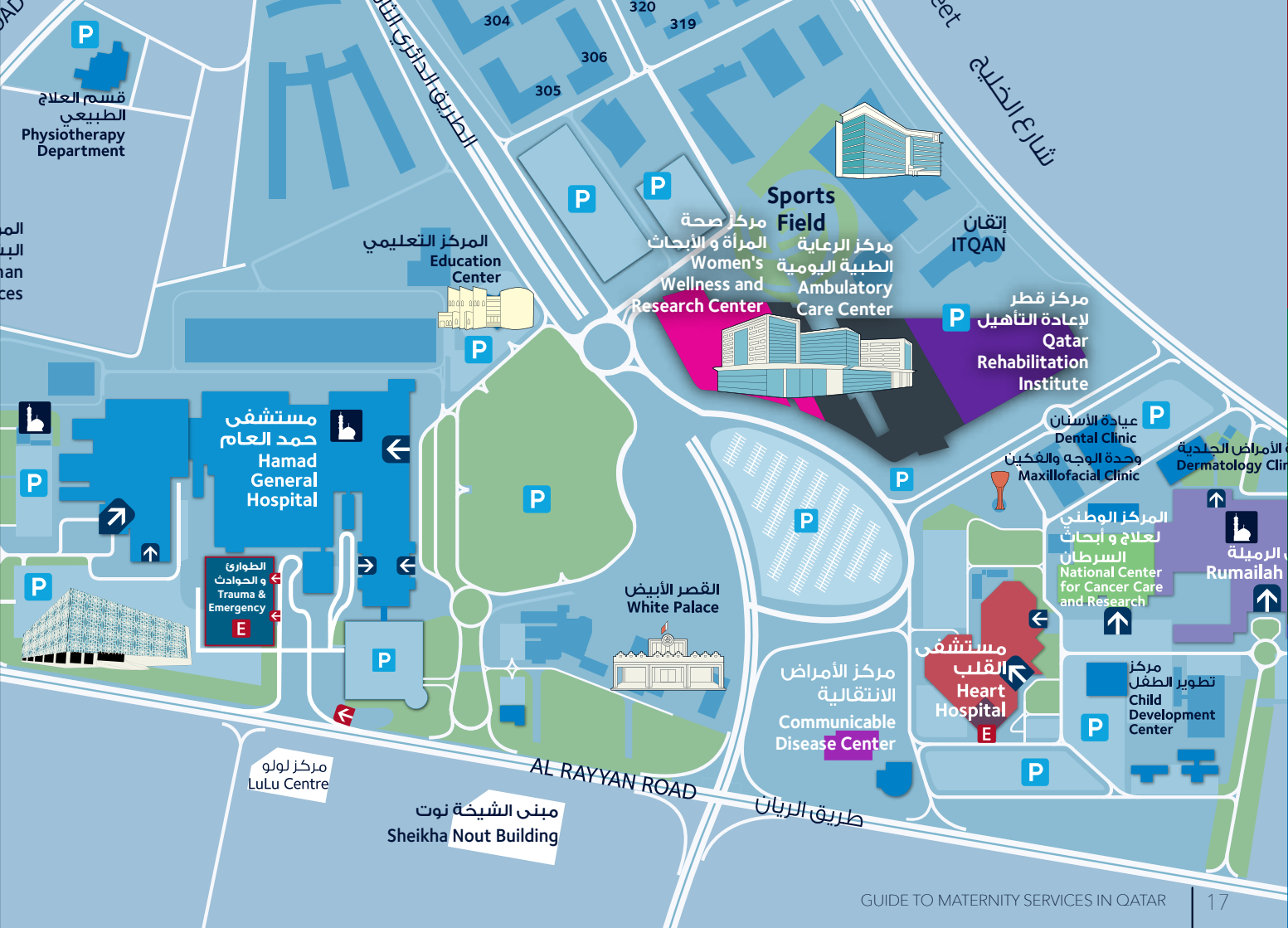
This facility has over 2,000 highly trained staff who have extensive experience in gynecology, obstetrics, and newborn care. It provides specialized care services to up to 30,000 women monthly through all stages of their life.



### Where is WWRC Located?

WWRC is located within Hamad Bin Khalifa Medical City campus next to the Ambulatory Care Center and Qatar Rehabilitation Institute.







## **What antenatal services are offered at WWRC?**

WWRC works in collaboration with Hamad Medical Corporation's partners at PHCC, Sidra Medicine and other private sector hospitals to provide the best possible antenatal care for pregnant women and their babies.

Antenatal care at WWRC is available to normal obstetric patient with pregnancy above 34 weeks and high-risk patient with pregnancy below 34 weeks. These antenatal services are provided by a multidisciplinary team comprising medical staff, nursing staff, midwives, dieticians, patient educators and physiotherapists.

The routine antenatal care on offer for women at WWRC include checking of vital signs including blood and urine tests and abdominal examination to ensure baby is growing normally and lying in the correct position. Women also receive advice regarding diet, exercise and their general health.

The WWRC's Patient Family Education Unit conducts daily and free Childbirth Education classes as part of expectant mums' routine antenatal care to educate them about the importance of keeping healthy throughout their pregnancy and after delivery.

Other services available to support obstetric patients are Phlebotomy, Pharmacy, Radiology, Cashier, Nesmaak and Security. Moreover, obstetric patient requiring admission can be admitted in WWRC Inpatient area, Labor Room and High Dependency Area.





## **What other specialized services are offered at WWRC?**

At HMC, maternity services are tailored to each woman's needs. Should a patient have a higher risk pregnancy, her general obstetrician will work closely with teams from across WWRC. Obstetric patients requiring specialty care can be referred according to their needs. Specialty Clinics that are available in WWRC are Feto-Maternal Unit, Gestational Diabetic Clinic, Internal Medicine, Cardiology, Early Pregnancy Clinic, Hematology, Perinatal Wellness and ADAU (Antenatal Day Assessment Unit).

- Feto-Maternal Unit provides maternal and fetal care. It focuses on the management of high-risk pregnancies through consultation, prenatal and perinatal counselling with a multidisciplinary team.
- Integrated Care for Diabetes in Pregnancy is part of National Diabetic Center (NDC). It provides consultation services, comprehensive management, diabetic education and management of thyroid disorder in pregnancy.
- General Internal Medicine Clinic provides timely follow-up and management of WWRC patients that require general medical outpatient review.
- Hematology Clinic - part of General Hematology Clinic services offer follow-up services for all obstetrics and gynecology patients with hematology disorders.
- Perinatal Wellness Clinic provides effective, evidence-based mental health assessment, diagnosis and treatment for patients attending WWRC.

- Maternity Cardiology Clinic provides consultation and determination of cardiac risk for women who are pregnant, specialized cardiac care for women throughout their pregnancies and follow-up of post-partum cases up to one year.
- ADAU (Antenatal Day Assessment Unit) - This service applies to all women with high risk pregnancies and post-delivery up to 42 days needing intervention on a day care basis.
- Midwifery Led Clinic is part of Midwifery Model of Care being run by midwives. It provides antenatal care for low risk pregnant mother. This clinic is under indirect supervision of obstetricians.
- WWRC's Outpatient Department also offers gynecology specialized care, like uro-gynecology, gyne-oncology, office hysteroscopy, MVA (manual vacuum aspiration), RPL (Repeated Pregnancy Loss), HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) and mis-miscarriage clinic.

WWRC's OPD is also providing services that are focused on neonates and pediatrics up to two years of age. The services include follow-up care of high risk and low risk babies. Newborn Screening Unit is also part of OPD where screening of all newborn babies in WWRC are being done. This unit also follows up on results of all newborn screening done in different health care facilities in Qatar.

In addition, the Outpatient service has Breast Care Triple Assessment Unit - an established hospital-based assessment that allows for early and rapid detection of breast cancer.



### **Labor and Delivery**

Women delivering at WWRC are looked after by one of the highly specialized obstetric teams and a dedicated support staff of nurses and midwives. Following delivery, women and their newborns are brought directly to one of WWRC's inpatient rooms with bathrooms. With large windows and beautiful views of the Corniche, these spaces have been designed to promote mother-baby bonding and encourage rest and recovery.



### **Postnatal Support Clinics**

WWRC offers a daily lactation clinic to support new mothers who are having difficulty breastfeeding, or who need reassurance about breastfeeding. The hospital's experienced clinicians offer information on a variety of topics including the importance of skin-to-skin contact, feeding cues and weaning, hand and manual milk expression and feeding positions that are comfortable for mother and baby.



### **Patient Family Education Unit**

The WWRC's Patient Family Education unit (PFE) conducts daily and free education sessions five days in a week to all mothers registered for antenatal services at the WWRC. The education programs are organized as individual or group education sessions covering antenatal, postnatal, breastfeeding, newborn care, and gynecology care. PFE also launched Childbirth Education classes, both in face-to-face and virtual sessions, for pregnant women to educate them about their general health in pregnancy and what to expect during and after delivery. These classes are helping to build confidence in mothers' ability to give birth and also provide an opportunity to discuss their fears about labor and birth with the educator and share experience with other women with the same concerns.





## **Community Midwifery Home Care Services**

Under the Postnatal Community Midwifery Home Care services, a team of midwives and nursing assistances provide postpartum specialized care to women, who have experienced a high-risk pregnancy or given birth by Caesarian section in the comfort of their homes. They help the women and their newborns receive prompt post-delivery care, get a referral to primary health care or to Mobile Doctors for any abnormality thus reducing the need to visit an emergency department for non-urgent reason or getting admitted to the hospital. The midwifery team makes two visits to the patients. The first visit is within 72 hours after birth while the follow up visit is conducted 7 to 14 days after birth.



## **How can you book an appointment at WWRC?**

WWRC accepts patients from the Primary Health Care Corporation and private health care facilities across the country. Once your appointment is confirmed at WWRC, you will receive a call from their customer care team - Nesma'ak. If you are being referred from a private hospital, you will need to bring your referral form to WWRC's Registration Desk to book an appointment.

Every woman availing maternity care at the hospital will need to provide a health card, a sponsor's letter, QID or passport, residential building number, copy of a marriage certificate or other proof of marriage document, husband's QID or passport (single patients are exempt from providing this document) when they first present to the hospital.







### **Do you have to pay for services at WWRC?**

Qatar residents with valid health cards are entitled to subsidized consultations and prescriptions. Patients or visitors without valid health card will be charged a higher fee for services. Some emergency medical services are provided free of charge. Please note that all hospital payments are made with a credit, debit or e-cash (QNB) card.



### **How can you contact WWRC?**

You can contact WWRC through HMC Customer Service Center – Nesma'ak on 16060 (Sunday to Thursday 7am to 10pm, Friday 2pm to 10pm, and Saturday 10am to 6pm) or via email: [nesmaak@hamad.qa](mailto:nesmaak@hamad.qa)



## Get to know the general hospitals



### About Al Khor Hospital

Opened in 2005, Al Khor Hospital is a 115-bed general hospital and one of Hamad Medical Corporation's community hospitals delivering high quality specialized care to the population living outside of Doha. The hospital provides high quality healthcare services to its diverse and growing community in the northern region of Qatar by integrating medical care, education and research.



### Where is Al Khor Hospital located?

Al Khor Hospital is located in the Northern region of Qatar.



### What antenatal services are offered at Al Khor Hospital?

The Al Khor Hospital's Obstetrics and Gynecology Department provides high quality and appropriate services to all patients in the northern area of Qatar. It provides excellent antenatal services including outpatient, emergency, labor room, operating theater, occupational therapy and diagnostic services while ensuring privacy and confidentiality of patients and their families. The department also specializes in infertility, recurrent pregnancy loss, urogynecology as well as Well Women Clinic, hormonal replacement therapy, antenatal/postnatal exercise center and antenatal education classes providing vital information about pregnancy and delivery to expectant mums.







### **How can you book an appointment at Al Khor Hospital?**

As with other HMC's maternity hospitals, you must have a referral from your primary health care center to book appointment through Nesma'ak Customer Service Center by calling (+974) 4474 5429.

Every woman availing maternity care at the hospital will need to provide a health card, a sponsor's letter, QID or passport, residential building number, copy of a marriage certificate or other proof of marriage document, husband's QID or passport (single patients are exempt from providing this document) when they first present to the hospital.



### **Do you have to pay for services at Al Khor Hospital?**

Most services at Al Khor Hospital are subsidized for patients with valid health cards. Please note that all hospital payments are made with a credit, debit or e-cash (QNB) card.



### **How can you contact Al Khor Hospital?**

You can contact Al Khor Hospital by calling: (+974) 4474 5555 or by fax: (+974) 4474 5281.

Also, you can reach the hospital through HMC Customer Service Center - Nesma'ak on 16060 (Sunday to Thursday 7am to 10pm, Friday 2pm to 10pm, and Saturday 10am to 6pm) or via email: [nesmaak@hamad.qa](mailto:nesmaak@hamad.qa)





## About Al Wakra Hospital

Al Wakra Hospital opened as a general hospital in 2012 to serve the rapidly growing towns of Al Wakra and Mesaieed in the southern region of the country.

With a combined staff of almost 4,000 including over 215 doctors working across a range of medical specialties, Al Wakra Hospital offers an impressive range of general hospital diagnostic and treatment services for outpatients, inpatients and day stay patients of all ages.

The hospital has capacity for more than 320 beds; over 50 of which are for obstetrics and gynecology and more than 35 in intensive care unit and neonatal intensive care unit.



## Where is Al Wakra Hospital located?

Al Wakra Hospital is located in the southern region of Doha offering the local community access to state-of-the-art healthcare services close to home removing the need to travel to Doha for much of their hospital care.







### **What antenatal services are offered at Al Wakra Hospital?**

The Obstetrics and Gynecology Department at Al Wakra Hospital provides women with top notch antenatal services including outpatient, labor room, emergency, operating theater as well as general gynecological and postnatal care ensuring a high level of privacy and confidentiality for patients and families throughout their treatment. A team of highly qualified professionals, working closely with Women's Wellness and Research Center, ensure you receive an excellent standard of care throughout your pregnancy and delivery.



### **How can you book an appointment at Al Wakra Hospital?**

To book appointment at Al Wakra Hospital, you must have a referral from your primary care center before calling the hospital's call center on 40114495/40114705 to fix a date for your appointment.

Every woman availing maternity care at the hospital will need to provide a health card, a sponsor's letter, QID or passport, residential building number, copy of a marriage certificate or other proof of marriage document, husband's QID or passport (single patients are exempt from providing this document) when they first present to the hospital.



### **Do you have to pay for services at Al Wakra Hospital?**

You must have a valid health card to be able to use the healthcare services provided at Al Wakra Hospital. Please note that all hospital payments are made with a credit, debit or e-cash (QNB) card.





## About The Cuban Hospital

The Cuban Hospital, located in Dukhan, is a joint project between the government of the State of Qatar and the government of the Republic of Cuba. The hospital, established in 2012 is staffed by more than 500 Cuban medical professionals including doctors, nurses and technicians. This workforce is supported by local staff and contractors.



## Where is The Cuban Hospital located?

The Cuban Hospital is located in Dukhan, a city in the western region of the country.



## What antenatal services are offered at The Cuban Hospital?

Working closely with Women's Wellness and Research Center, The Cuban Hospital's maternity service, or the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department, provides high quality antenatal care in the Outpatient Department and Emergency Department.

The hospital has a maternity ward, labor rooms, operating theaters, ICU (adult) and level 3 neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) to provide the best postnatal and gynecological care to women in Dukhan and its environ. The hospital provides full neonatal screening services and newborn circumcisions.

A wide range of clinical services are provided to support any complications during pregnancy, delivery and postnatal care.





Easily accessible from the Outpatient Department is the Laboratory, Pharmacy and Radiology departments to provide a wide range of investigations and services if needed. The hospital also provides a wide range of allied health services from the fully equipped Rehabilitation Department including hydrotherapy pool, gym, and specialist treatment rooms.

Every woman availing maternity care at the hospital will need to provide a health card, a sponsor's letter, QID or passport, residential building number, copy of a marriage certificate or other proof of marriage document, husband's QID or passport (single patients are exempt from providing this document) when they first present to the hospital.



### **How can you book an appointment at the Cuban Hospital?**

The Cuban Hospital welcomes patients at any stage of their pregnancy. However, any late stage pregnancies must be assessed prior to delivery.

You can contact HMC's Nesma'ak team on 16060 to book appointment at The Cuban Hospital's Outpatient Department. Nesma'ak will advise the information you will need to provide.



### **Do you have to pay for services at The Cuban Hospital?**

With your valid health card, you are entitled to subsidized consultations and prescriptions at The Cuban Hospital. Patients or visitors without valid a health card will be charged a higher fee for services. Emergency medical services are provided free of charge. Please note that all hospital payments are made with a credit, debit or e-cash (QNB) card.



## Private sector maternity care providers



### Overview of the private healthcare sector in Qatar

There are a few hospitals and clinics located throughout Qatar to compliment maternity services offered across all the public health care facilities. The private sector provides a broad range of secondary care services ranging from outpatients to inpatients care services. These private health facilities provide inpatients services while Ministry of Interior health centers, Qatar Petroleum health centers and Qatar Red Crescent Society offer outpatients services.

### How many private sector hospitals in Qatar offer maternity services?

There are four major private sector hospitals, which offer maternity services in Qatar. They are Sidra Medicine, Al Ahli Hospital, Doha Clinic Hospital and Al Emadi Hospital. They operate this specialized service in co-ordination with HMC's Women's Wellness and Research Center.





## Get to know private sector hospitals



### Sidra Medicine

Sidra Medicine is a private tertiary care hospital for public benefit. It offers specialized care for women, children and young people in Qatar, the Gulf region and internationally. It is also an academic medical center with a world-class research facility.

In a hospital designed to promote healing, its teams include highly skilled, multidisciplinary healthcare and research professionals from around the world.



### Where is Sidra Medicine located?

Sidra Medicine is located in the Al Gharaffa neighborhood, across from Education City in Doha, Qatar. The healthcare organization sits on the northwest corner of Al Luqta and Al Gharaffa streets, next to the Qatar Science & Technology Park and in front of the Qatar National Convention Centre.





### **What antenatal services are offered at Sidra Medicine?**

Antenatal services at Sidra Medicine include maternal fetal medicine; gynecology; ultrasound; reproductive medicine (IVF); perinatal mental health; women's health physiotherapy; lactation consultations; and cervical screenings. Sidra Medicine also has a Women's Urgent Care and Obstetric Triage service.

The services at Sidra Medicine are supported by a consultant team of obstetricians, nurses and midwives. For more details, visit [www.sidra.org](http://www.sidra.org).



### **How can you book an appointment at Sidra Medicine?**

Women's Services at Sidra Medicine do not require referrals. Women can call directly to book an appointment. For inquiries and bookings, please contact the Women's Care Coordination Team on 40037113 or email: [wcct@sidra.org](mailto:wcct@sidra.org).



### **Do you have to pay for antenatal services at Sidra Medicine?**

Women's Services at Sidra Medicine are based on a private model of care. Payment is accepted by insurance or self-pay. For details, please call 40037113.





## Get to know other private sector hospitals and antenatal services they offer

In addition to all HMC's maternity hospitals, some private hospitals in Qatar such as Al Ahli Hospital, Al Emadi Hospital, Doha Clinic Hospital also have maternity facilities. They operate this specialized service in co-ordination with the Women's Wellness and Research Center.



### How to book an appointment at any of the private hospitals?

Patients can contact the private hospital directly to book an antenatal appointment or they can go straight to the hospital's Emergency Department if they need urgent care.



### How affordable are the charges for services at private hospitals?

Each private hospital charge differing rates to patients for the care they provide. You can contact individual hospital directly for details on their payment rates. Private hospitals accept a wide range of health insurance policies. However, you have to contact the hospitals directly to find out which insurance policies they accept.



## **Important tips for your health and wellbeing in pregnancy**

- Eating a healthy diet and keeping active can keep you healthy throughout and give your baby the best possible start in life.
- Women who eat well and exercise regularly along with regular prenatal care are less likely to have complications during pregnancy.
- Women who eat well and live healthily during pregnancy are also more likely to successfully give birth to a healthy baby.
- Have breakfast every day as this will help you to avoid snacking on foods that are high in fat and sugar.
- Fruit and vegetables as well as minerals and vitamins provide fiber, which helps digestion and prevents constipation. So, eat 3 to 5 servings of a variety of colorful raw vegetables and fruits per day.
- Eat moderate amounts of protein each day. Choose lean meat, remove the skin from poultry and cook them well using only a little fat. Try to eat two portions of fish a week.
- Eat 2 to 3 portions of dairy foods like cheese, milk or yogurt a day, using low-fat varieties whenever you can.



## **Food to avoid in pregnancy**

- There are some foods that you should not eat when you are pregnant because they may make you ill or harm your baby.
- Avoid partially cooked eggs or undercooked meat, unpasteurized milk, some types of fish - shark, marlin and swordfish. Also limit eating tuna.
- Avoid mould-ripened soft cheese like Brie, Camembert and others with a similar rind.

## **Ensure to watch your weight**

- Most women gain between 10kg and 12.5kg (22 to 28lb) while pregnant.
- Weight gain varies a great deal and depends on your weight before pregnancy.
- Putting on too much weight can affect your health.
- However, you do not need to diet, but only to eat healthily and keep up your normal daily activity or exercise.

## **Be physically active**

- The more active and fit you are during pregnancy, the easier it will be for you to adapt to your changing shape and weight gain.
- Try to fit mild to moderate exercises such as stomach strengthening, pelvic tilt and floor exercises, and feet exercises into your daily routine.
- These exercises will strengthen your muscles so that you can carry extra weight, make your joints stronger, ease backache and generally make you feel well.

## **Pregnancy and Respiratory Infections**

- Due to changes in their bodies and immune systems, it is known that pregnant women can be badly affected by some respiratory infections like coronavirus (COVID-19). It is therefore important that pregnant women take precautions to protect themselves against such infections. If you fell sick, you should immediately report possible symptoms including fever, cough or difficulty breathing to your healthcare provider.
- There is more information on pregnancy and COVID-19 on [www.moph.qa](http://www.moph.qa).

## Breastfeeding Tips

- All babies need to be fed with their mothers' breastmilk because it contains ideal nutrients for all babies. Breastmilk contains everything the baby needs in best quality and quantity. It protects babies from common acute and chronic illnesses. Breastfeeding benefits babies, mothers and families.
- Mothers who chose to breastfeed should initiate breastfeeding immediately after birth and express their milk within the first 2 to 6 hours of delivery. If they are not able to breastfeed, they need to express breastmilk by hand or by using a breast pump.



### You want to know more? Here are some frequently asked questions about giving birth?

#### Q. Where can I have my baby at HMC?

**A.** You can give birth at any HMC's maternity hospitals, but it is best to choose the one near to your home for more convenience and easy access.

If your pregnancy is considered normal, you will likely have received your antenatal care in the maternity unit at one of our four maternity hospitals closest to your home. This is the hospital which you will be visiting if you think you are in labor.

If you have been categorized with having a pregnancy which is more complicated or high risk you will be delivering at the Women's Wellness and Research Center.

#### Q. When should I come to the hospital?

**A.** You should go to your designated hospital if you are experiencing one of the following:

- You feel your water break
- You start bleeding
- You no longer feel baby move
- You are feeling abdominal pain
- You have a fall or sustain trauma to the abdomen
- You have vomiting and diarrhea
- You have itchy hands and feet
- You have a headache or visual disturbances
- You experience frequency in passing urine
- You are generally feeling unwell

### **Q. How do I know I'm in labor?**

**A.** You are in labor if:

- You are experiencing regular abdominal pains every 2 to 3 minutes in 10-minute duration. It may be helpful to have your husband/mother/sister time how often these are occurring within a 10-minute span.
- You feel a gush of fluid or a trickle of liquid coming out of your vagina. This is referred to as a "Spontaneous Rupture of Membrane".
- You've seen mucus dislodging from your vagina or blood.
- You feel pressure on your bladder, or you are urinating frequently.
- You are experiencing diarrhea/nausea/vomiting.

If you are experiencing all of the above, then you may be in labor. Please ask a friend or family member to drop you off at the emergency entrance of the WWRC (or the hospital you have been booked into for delivery), where our care team will further assess you.

If your labor has not yet sufficiently progressed and you are not ready to deliver in the near future, you will either be kept for observation or sent home with instructions.

### **Q. How do I know which birthing option is best for me?**

**A.** If you are in labor, our team from the Emergency Department will transfer you to the Labor and Delivery unit or the operating theater. Based on their assessment of both your health and that of your baby, our team of doctors, midwives and nurses will recommend a vaginal or a C-section led delivery.

### **Q. What should I bring with me to the hospital when coming to deliver?**

**A.** You should bring a prepacked bag containing the following items:

#### **For you:**

- Something comfortable to wear during labor
- Good support bras
- Breast pads
- Maternity panties
- Maternity pads
- Night dress/pajamas
- A pair of slippers
- Toiletries/Vaseline/lip balm
- Face cloth and large towel
- Hair band
- Outfit to wear when going home

#### **For baby:**

- Diapers/nappies (1 pack)
- Baby wipes
- Hat/bonnet (2 pieces)
- Vests/singlet (3 to 4 pieces)
- Scratch mittens and socks
- Baby suit (3 pieces)
- Baby blanket (3 pieces)
- Baby shawl (2 pieces)

**Q. Why can't I just walk-in to any HMC's maternity hospital and be seen by a doctor?**

**A.** HMC's maternity hospitals provide secondary and tertiary level care to women whose needs are too complex to be treated at a primary care center. This is why most services can only be accessed through referrals from primary care center, other HMC facilities or the private sector.

**What do I need to know about breastfeeding my baby?**

**A.** Mother's milk has been proven to be the best food for all babies because it contains all the nutrients that baby needs for normal growth and brain development. Breastmilk is also being described as baby's first immunization against acute infections, common childhood illnesses, and chronic diseases like diabetes, heart diseases, overweight and obesity.

**Follow these tips to successfully breastfeed:**

- Be self-confident and comfortable both physically and mentally.
- Maintain eye contact, touch, talk or cuddle the baby.
- Initiate early breastfeeding and practice regular skin-to-skin contact at least 6 to 8 times a day.
- Put baby to breast whenever he/she shows signs of hunger or to feed the baby often between 8 to 12 times a day because baby's stomach is small.

### **Q. I am a working mum, how can I safely express my milk to feed my baby while I am away work?**

**A.** If you're a working mom that will be returning to work but still wants to continue breastfeeding, you should start practicing how to express breast milk after birth at least within 2 to 6 hours. You can express breastmilk by hand or by using a breast pump.

#### **Take note of the following tips:**

- It is advisable to express breastmilk by the baby's bedside.
- Pump the breast often and intervals should not exceed more than 4 hours and the length of each expression should be within 10 to 15 minutes.
- Ensure to empty the breast completely to maintain milk production.
- You may need a portable cooler/ice box with ice packs to carry expressed breastmilk if the baby is separated from you.

### **Q. How do I feed refrigerated or frozen breastmilk to my baby?**

**A.** Once expressed and if you do not need it straight away, the breastmilk should be stored correctly to prevent it from spoiling. Store in a sterile container to be sealed with a lid and not with a bottle teat as the hole in the teat can allow bacteria into the container. In order to use the oldest milk first (first in first out), the container should be numbered and labeled before refrigerating or freezing the milk.



**Take note of the following tips to warm and thaw expressed breastmilk:**

Freshly expressed breastmilk: if the expressed breastmilk is kept under room temperature, it can be given directly without warming.

Refrigerated breastmilk: if the breastmilk is cold, place the bottle in a bowl of warm water or hold the bottle under cold running water then slowly run warm water until it thaws.

**Frozen breastmilk:**

- Put the bottle or bag in the refrigerator overnight, hold it under warm running water, or set it in a container of warm water.
- Once fully thawed, it may be kept at room temperature for a maximum of two hours or in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours.
- Don't thaw or heat frozen breast milk in gas stove, microwave or in boiling water.
- Thawed breast milk left at room temperature should be fed to your baby within two hours.
- Never re-freeze breast milk once thawed.

**You want to know more?**

<https://www.hamad.qa/EN/your%20health/Maternal-and-Child-Health/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://www.hamad.qa/AR/your%20health/Maternal-and-Child-Health/Pages/default.aspx>





