While giving birth today are more educated and involved in their delivery. “We’re seeing a trend toward more natural childbirth,” said Raudesbaugh, “and we want women to know that we can tailor their experience to what they want and still have all safety measures in place. It’s the best of both worlds.”

Beginning with labor, the Women’s Pavilion offers many natural ways to help a patient progress as pain and intervention free as possible. “Birthing balls, movement during labor, a birthing tub and breathing/coaching/partner support” are all great ways to naturally reduce pain during labor, said Benekos.

“We encourage the use of a support person with the mother through the birth process,” said Raudesbaugh. “Evidence has shown that having continuous support during labor results in a more satisfying experience and may enhance the labor process. Supportive care may involve comfort measures, emotional support, and providing information.”

While WCH does not have midwives, they do offer one-on-one patient care during labor and delivery. “Patients appreciate this continuity of care. Women get to know their doctors and nurses well,” said Benekos.

Dr. Rebecca Russell, current Chairperson for the OB/GYN Department, agreed that the “personal touch” is very important. “I think we do a good job of delivering top quality care but maintaining that personal connection to our patients.”

Vaginal births after cesarean delivery are offered and encouraged, said Benekos. “We are actively reducing our c-section rate by offering and encouraging more vaginal birth after cesarean.”

“The health, safety and satisfaction of our mothers and babies are the top priorities,” said Tara. “The physicians and nurses work hard to ensure that all women are making informed choices about their birth experience.”

After delivery, “we encourage skin to skin for at least a full hour uninterrupted,” said Raudesbaugh. “We also promote rooming in. We have a lactation specialist on staff to help with breastfeeding. A lactation consultant is also available to meet with patients after discharge regardless if they have delivered at WCH or elsewhere.”

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Since January, specially trained nurses and physicians have cared for infants born prematurely but are at least 32 weeks and at three pounds, five ounces. “Previously, babies requiring additional care were transported to the main campus at Akron Children’s Hospital. The traveling was difficult for moms and their families at a time when bonding is essential. By providing the Special Care Nursery, we have helped keep our moms and babies together in their home community.”

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