

# Maternity care in a Catholic hospital

Mater Mothers' Hospitals are the largest provider of maternity and newborn care in Australia, delivering more than 10 000 babies each year.

For women with high-risk pregnancies, Mater offers a state-of-the-art maternal fetal medicine service which provides expert diagnosis and management of complex obstetric cases and more than 2000 seriously ill and premature babies receive specialist care within our Neonatal Critical Care Unit each year.

Mater is renowned for providing high quality, compassionate care for women and their families, in accordance with the philosophy and tradition of the Sisters of Mercy.

## What is a Catholic hospital?

A Catholic hospital follows the teachings of Jesus Christ, and those of the Catholic Church. This means that we believe in upholding and promoting the dignity of the whole person from conception to death. We believe that each person is unique and we respect their faith, spirituality, culture, and beliefs. We partner with our patients, their families and loved ones to provide the best care possible.

## Mission and Values

Mater is dedicated to providing healthcare services through a sincere commitment to our core Values of Mercy, Dignity, Care, Commitment and Quality.

A Catholic not-for-profit ministry, we are committed to an holistic approach to healthcare in response to ever-changing community needs. We continually strive to improve how we deliver patient care, keep our knowledge and skills relevant, advance our understanding of illness and health, and manage resources effectively.

Mater was established by the Brisbane Sisters of Mercy—a Religious Order, who are devoted to healthcare, education, social services and the spiritual well-being of the community. In the spirit of the Sisters of Mercy, Mater offers compassionate



service to the sick and needy. Following the example of Christ the healer, we commit ourselves to offering these services without discrimination.

### **What services are not provided at a Catholic hospital?**

The Catholic Church values human life from conception. Therefore, in accordance with the principles of the Church, we do not provide termination of pregnancy or contraceptive procedures.

### **Contraception**

Mater Hospitals do not perform procedures where the direct intent or goal is to make a person temporarily or permanently incapable of having children.

There are however, some procedures or medications that are indicated medically to treat specific conditions, which as a consequence, may affect a person's ability to conceive. Such procedures and medications are provided at Mater where their primary purpose is to treat a medical condition.

There are also some lifesaving procedures required in emergency situations which may result in a woman's inability to have children in the future (e.g. an emergency hysterectomy to control haemorrhage). Such procedures will always be performed in consultation with the woman, to save the life of the woman concerned, even if this means she will be unable to have children in the future.

### **Termination of pregnancy**

We respect every woman's right to follow her conscience in medical decisions, including her right to request a termination of pregnancy. We understand this is a difficult decision often made under difficult circumstances and time constraints. However, Mater Mothers' Hospitals do not provide terminations of pregnancy.

If such a request is made, in order to achieve the best possible outcome, we will ensure she has all the information she requires to attend another facility that will provide appropriate counselling and clinical services to help with a final decision, and provide ongoing support.

However, if a woman's life is in danger, we will provide life-saving treatment even if the unintended consequence is the loss of her baby.

## Further information

We hope this information provides understanding of our role as a Catholic hospital providing care for women and their babies. Please discuss your specific situation and concerns with the healthcare professional (doctor or midwife) caring for you.

For further information about Mater Mothers' Hospitals, please visit [www.maternal.org.au](http://www.maternal.org.au)

For further information go to either <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/children/pregnancy/unplanned> or <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/specific/termination-of-pregnancy-legislation>

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## Mater Misericordiae Ltd,

Raymond Terrace, South Brisbane Qld  
4101

P 07 3163 8111 F 07 3163 8112

E [info@mater.org.au](mailto:info@mater.org.au)

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