Pregnant women to benefit from new aromatherapy service

Thirty trained midwives on the midwife-led unit in the Lister's Diamond Jubilee Maternity Unit to launch service for women in labour to mark national aromatherapy awareness week (9-15 June 2014)

**Stevenage, UK – 4 June 2014** – A new aromatherapy service has been launched at the Lister's Diamond Jubilee Maternity Unit, the aim of which is to help improve the experience of women during labour and birth.

The service is being offered to women giving birth in the unit’s midwife-led unit and uses a variety of essential oils to help women relax, and improve physical and psychological well-being during labour and birth. Aromatherapy oils can be administered by inhalation or in combination with other therapies, such as massage or compresses.

Lead midwife Annabel Bradburn, who has qualified in complementary therapies for pregnancy and childbirth, has so far trained thirty midwives at the Trust to administer aromatherapy safely during labour and hopes to extend complementary therapy services to other areas of maternity care in the future.

Commenting on the new service, Annabel said:

“Women in early and established labour can sometimes experience fear, anxiety and physical discomfort. Aromatherapy can help to alleviate these and encourage relaxation, which can lead to a more comfortable and straightforward birth.”
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“Many women giving birth in the Midwife-led unit have already experienced the benefits of using the aromatherapy service. One mum, who recently used aromatherapy during her birth told us that it was an amazing experience, a real turning point in her labour. She felt it had helped her to relax and focus.

“Midwives themselves are enjoying the benefits too. One colleague told me recently how she loves having another tool that she can use, especially in the latent phase. Our midwives find that women and their partners are really positive about the new service and of course it smells divine!”

Latent labour (early labour) can be a demanding time for many women, particularly those expecting their first baby. Midwives are now able to prepare an individualised aromatherapy blend for women who return home in early labour, to help reduce anxiety and relieve pain. Aromatherapy can also be used to encourage labour to “get going” again when things slow down, and to alleviate symptoms such as nausea and headaches. Birth supporters can also be shown simple massage techniques, helping them to feel more involved in the birth process too.

National Aroma therapy Awareness week runs from 9-15 June 2014. There will be a display in maternity reception area at the Lister throughout the week for advice and information about the new service, along with the benefits that aromatherapy can offer.

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