Having a Baby in China

If you would have asked us five years ago if we thought we would still be in China, let alone having two children here, we would have said you were crazy. It really has been an interesting experience for us living and having babies in China.

Being pregnant without insurance in a foreign country can be very frightening. This was the case for us when we became pregnant with our first. We quickly started “touring” the hospitals in Beijing. It didn’t take long to learn that the Western-style hospitals were way out of our price-range. This left us with Chinese hospitals. We developed some criteria for acceptable hospitals at which to deliver our baby. The two most important criteria were: the hospital must allow the father to accompany the mother during the entire delivery, and the hospital must not “require” C-Sections for delivery. Additional important considerations were, of course, the cleanliness of the facilities and equipment, and the English language level of the doctors - though we weren’t holding our breath on that last one. In the end, we found a very nice hospital that was able to meet all our needs.

First Child
Our first child was born by natural birth in Beijing at Peking Union Medical College Hospital. It is one of Beijing’s most famous hospitals. The birth went quite smoothly. Only thirty minutes after we arrived at the hospital our beautiful Anna Mae was born. At one point during the delivery the doctor brought over some tools including a scalpel and scissors. We were afraid they were preparing to do a C-Section. To add to this fear, we heard the doctor and nurses discussing what we thought sounded like a C-Section. It turned out they were just preparing to break the water sac. Let me explain. The words for C-Section in Chinese are “Pou fu chan.” The “Pou” is pronounced like Poe, as in Edgar Allen Poe. The word for break is “Po” which is pronounced like Poe, but with an “uh” sound at the end: “Poe-uh”. When they said “Po,” we heard it as “Pou” and assumed they were going to do a C-Section. When we asked the doctor in Chinese if they were going to do a “Pou fu chan” (C-Section), he replied back in Chinese, “No.” That was when we realized our language mistake.

Second Child
The birth of our second child was much different than the first. Not only were we no longer novices at having a baby in China, we also had insurance. Having insurance really opens the door to being able to deliver at a Western-style hospital. We did consider having our child here in Qingdao, but because we were in need of the hard-to-find-

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When we were pregnant with our first child, we tried to search online for help. We were surprised to find that there was relatively little information available. Because we have seen a great need for information about having a baby in China, we have put together a website called Having a Baby In China at www.havingababyinchina.com. Please come and take a look.
in-China Rhogam shot, we decided that going to Beijing was the best option for our family. After doing another tour of hospitals in Beijing, we decided to give birth at the American-Sino OB/GYN Hospital. We chose this hospital because of the friendliness of the nurses and doctors and the high standards of service and equipment.

Again, the birth of our second went very smoothly. Our son Lucas came two weeks early by natural birth. The Rhogam shot that we had arranged beforehand was administered and we are now a family of four!

Having a baby in China can certainly be a scary thing, but having gone through two deliveries now, we can say that it is very possible to meet the needs of your family.