

## 4-11 Registration of Birth

Once a doctor has confirmed your pregnancy, you must register your pregnancy at your municipal office. Bring your Residence Card and fill out Pregnancy Notification Form (妊娠届, *ninshin todoke*) with your name and address, giving the name of the doctor and the name and address of the medical institution he or she is affiliated with. You will receive a Mother and Child Health Handbook (母子手帳, *boshi techō*), in which will be recorded during the course of your pregnancy and childbirth, as well as your baby's growth and immunization records. Be sure to take it to each prenatal visit and, of course, to delivery. Included in the Mother and Child Health Handbook is a packet containing local information and immunization schedules. Before childbirth, you should contact your embassy and find out the procedures for obtaining a passport for your baby.

### Costs

A typical prenatal visit costs between 3,500 yen and 10,000 yen depending on the place, how many tests are performed and whether you use the free coupons provided by your local city. At some facilities, ultra sound is routine and included in the fee. Other places might do them only once or twice and charge extra. The average cost of a normal delivery and a 5 to 7 day stay is currently 350,000 yen – 450,000 yen. The hospital or birth center you use will require you to make your payment, generally in cash, when you are discharged.

### Insurance

Japanese Health Insurance does not cover prenatal checkups, but you can use discount or free coupons provided by your local city. When you report your pregnancy to your local government with your Mother and Child Health Handbook you will receive a prenatal checkup coupons. With these coupons, your co-pay will be free or reduced, but if any additional tests are done the price could be higher. (Note: If you receive checkups outside the city or ward you have registered residency in, you may have to pay an additional fee.)

If you have insurance with a Japanese health insurer, you should be able to receive birth allowance. The allowance is usually around 400,000 yen, but could be higher or lower depending on your insurer. You have two options to receive this allowance. You can choose to pay the full delivery cost fee at the time of discharge, and then be reimbursed for the allowance amount at a later date, or you arrange your insurer to pay this allowance directly to your hospital or birth center. This so called “direct payment” can be arranged from your place of delivery.

### Language barrier and cultural differences

When choosing the place of delivery, you will need some idea of what kind of delivery you need considering your physical condition, Japanese language ability, financial situation, etc. One big difference to western countries is that in Japan, fathers are not always permitted to attend the delivery. At some facilities, fathers are allowed only into the labor room, but not the delivery room. At others he can only wait in the waiting room. Some places though, encourage fathers to participate and sometimes, if you have communication problems, they might even allow you to bring a friend who can interpret and assist you.

### Register with municipal office

Shortly before you are discharged from your Japanese hospital or midwife clinic, you will be given your child's birth certificate (出生届, *shusseitodoke*). One side will have your child's birth data; the other side is for you to fill in with your child's name, parent's names and nationalities, etc. Once completed in Japanese, this form needs to be taken to your local city hall or ward office within two weeks. Make sure to bring along your personal seal and your Mother and Child Health Handbook.

While you are at the municipal office, you may also receive information about a midwife or nurse visit to your home (to make sure it is a safe environment for your baby, talk about vaccines and other information and answer any questions you might have), paperwork on how to receive reimbursement for doctor's visits, and paperwork to receive a child allowance according to your prefecture's policies. The city office will also give you official copies of the birth certificate. Remember to ask your embassy how many they require.

In about a week, you will receive your child's birth certificate (出生届記載事項証明書, *shusseitodoke kisai jiko shoumeisho*) in the mail from the city or ward office showing that you have successfully registered with them. This paper should be cut out and glued to the inside of your Mother and Child Health Handbook. There is also child benefit (児童手当, *jidouteate*) for low income families. It is 5,000 yen per month (10,000 yen per month from the 3rd child). Ask at the child welfare counter for more information.

### Register with Immigration Bureau

If both parents are non-Japanese and you plan to stay longer than 60 days after your child's birth in Japan, the next step is to apply for the baby's residence card at the nearest Regional Immigration Bureau branch. You have to apply for a visa (residence permission) within 30 days of the birth. To avoid any penalties, you have to apply within 30 days whether you received the child's passport or not. If you have applied for a passport but haven't got it yet, bring the document showing that you have applied with you to the immigration office.

In addition to forms that the Regional Immigration Bureau office will give you, you will also need to submit:

1. Application for Permission to acquire Status of Residence (<http://www.moj.go.jp/content/001290240.pdf>)
2. Both parents' passports
3. Both parents' residence cards
4. Child's birth certificate (出生届記載事項証明書, *shusseitodoke kisai jiko shoumeisho*)
5. Mother and Child Health Handbook
6. Your baby's passport, if you have it (but you do not need to have it before applying)

### Apply for passport and other foreign government papers

The last step is to apply for a passport with your home country's embassy. Inform yourself prior to your visit how to obtain your baby's passport. Some embassies want you to make an appointment ahead of time and want the mother, father, and baby to appear together in person for the appointment.