Which Hospital Should I Deliver In? (KKH vs TMC. vs MAH)

Description

Public vs. Private?

We took a total of 8 months before deciding on which hospital to deliver in, because being Budget Babe, I wanted to really review and evaluate my options before deciding! After all, childbirth is going to be one of the most major experiences in my life, and I really wanted to think through where would be best for me as I go through this milestone that will change my life forever.

One of the major considerations of whether to deliver in a public or private hospital would be that of costs. To get an estimate of the bill sizes across different hospitals in Singapore, you can refer to MOHâ??s website here. There are pros and cons of each, so ultimately it boils down to your personal preference and affordability.

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Hospital	Ward Type	Volume	Average Length of Stay	Low ($)	Middle ($)	High ($)
GEH	1-bedded	746	2.5	8,558	9,775	11,267
MAH	1-bedded	2,099	2.4	6,822	7,957	9,088
MEH	1-bedded	884	2.5	8,223	9,401	10,438
MNH	1-bedded	881	2.5	7,987	9,084	10,137
PEH	1-bedded	489	2.1	6,104	7,007	7,713
RH	1-bedded	402	2.2	7,397	8,539	9,593
TMC	1-bedded	1,437	2.3	6,048	7,055	8,004

Source: Ministry of Health

Husbands, do let your wives choose if you can, because theyâ??re the ones giving birth and going through the entire painful process, so the least you can do is to give them the maximum level of comfort that both of you can afford.

I was initially leaning towards KKH as itâ??ll be more affordable, but after learning about how in exchange (as a public and subsidized patient), you donâ??t get to choose your doctor / anaesthetist / paediatrician during the whole labour process, I felt I wouldnâ??t be able to handle the uncertainty! Moreover, I got admitted in my 30th week of pregnancy for a premature delivery scare (when I fell down the overhead bridge) and **the KKH bill estimate given to me was $5,949** (after government subsidy, for A1 ward via normal delivery), which wasnâ??t really as low as I had expected it to be.

(You can also read my reasons as to why we opted for a private gynae over a public hospital for our first pregnancy journey here.)

As a result, we decided that delivering in a private hospital would be the best and most reassuring option for us. It might be slightly pricier (but not by much, either), but my husband said itâ??ll be more worth it to pay for my comfort and peace of mind :â??)

Choosing between Thomson Medical Centre & Mount Alvernia Hospital

If youâ??re with a private gynae, you should first ask which hospital(s) they deliver in before deciding which one you prefer to go with. Our gynae only delivers at 3 hospitals, so we were limited to TMC and MAH as both hospitals were the nearest to where we live (a 20-minute drive away).

In choosing our hospital of choice for delivery, my husband and I considered the following factors, in the following order of importance:

- Cost
- Labour facilities and room amenities
- Service and friendliness of their nurses
- Expertise of their lactation consultant(s)
- In-hospital food
- Post-hospitalisation support and freebies (heh)
- Discounts and incentives
- Insurance privileges

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I took a photo of their rates comparison during my hospital tour as well. This was in one of the lifts!

Costs

Many mummies who have previously stayed in shared wards (2 or 4-bedders) have openly talked about how it was difficult for them to rest properly as they were kept awake by their ward neighbours / crying babies / visitors. Also, only single rooms allow for your husband to stay over, and I wanted mine around for emotional support and strength after the birthing ordeal.

Single room	Thomson Medical Centre	Mount Alvernia Hospital

Daily room rate (w. GST)	$567.10	$569.24
Companion fee / day	$100 *(nicer food + more meals)*	$85
Baby nursery charges / day	$100	$100
Motherâ??s treatment fees / day	$150	$150

According to the Ministry of Healthâ??s overall delivery bill estimates, **TMC was one of the most affordable**. For my fellow friend who delivered a month before me in a public hospital i.e. KKH under Ward A (letâ??s use that as the best equivalent to a single room in a private hospital), the room rate was from $533 a day, so thatâ??s really not much of a difference vs. if you head over to a private hospital instead as you can see from the above.

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Labour facilities and room amenities
I went for the hospital tour by both TMC and MAH, and although both were equally well-equipped for labour and delivery, I felt more at ease in TMCâ??s atmosphere as it felt more homely, in contrast to MAH where there are both maternity *and* sick patients. This might be due to the fact that one is a birthing centre whereas the other is ultimately still a hospital.

After my friendâ??s experience with hydrotherapy for pain relief, I was also keen to look for a hospital that could offer this, and thatâ??s when I found out TMC is the only private hospital in Singapore with such facilities for water birth. MAH didnâ??t have this option, which was a little disappointing for us.

In terms of rooms, MAHâ??s rooms were slightly bigger in size, especially if you go for their St Michael or Super Deluxe rooms (which are also more expensive). I didnâ??t feel the need to go for such a big room though, and felt TMCâ??s rooms were just nice without being cramped, and of course more cozy with sleek leather sofas for the husbands.



Thomson Medical Centreâ??s maternity ward

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Mount Alvernia Hospitalâ??s maternity ward

Some might also feel more awkward at MAH due to their religious affiliation (it is a Catholic hospital), so I would highly encourage that you sign up for a hospital tour with the ones that youâ??re considering so that you can get a better feel of the vibes in person for yourself.

The nurses
Iâ??ve heard good things from other mothers about the nurses at both hospitals, but when we were there for the hospital tour, TMCâ??s nurses seemed more friendly and helpful. A friend of mine who recently delivered at TMC also had nothing but high praises for their nurses in terms of experience, patience and professionalism.

Expertise of their lactation consultant(s)
Both hospitals are pro-breastfeeding, which was an important consideration for me because I wanted support and guidance on how to latch baby right and breastfeed him.

I attended a few pregnancy conferences even before I decided on which hospital to deliver at, and was particularly impressed by Dr. Wong Boh Boi, so when I found out that sheâ??s with TMC, that was an additional plus point for me!

Do also note that Mount Alvernia does NOT allow patients to bring their own breast pump, and instead charges for the rental *each time.* On the other hand, TMC allows you to use your own breast pump, and the lactation consultant was even kind enough to teach my friend how to operate hers during the visit!

In-hospital food
At the most recent pregnancy conference I attended (in my 8th month), I also got to try out TMCâ??s confinement food and longan red dates tea which was super delicious! You can read my live update of the event here. My friend who recently delivered at TMC also raved about their signature fish and papaya soup, which is served to all mothers who deliver there and is specially designed to boost breast milk supply. Iâ??ve not tried it yet, but am looking forward to!

Was unable to compare with Mount Alverniaâ??s food since I didnâ??t get to try it at all, but reviews online donâ??t seem to speak well of their food for those who have delivered there. My friend also recently delivered at Mount Alvernia and had a bad experience, to the extent that she said sheâ??ll rather go for TMC or pay more for Mount E if she has a third child.

An additional point to note is that at TMC, all mothers get free-flow of longan and red date tea after delivery for the duration of your stay, but at Mount Alvernia, youâ??re only given a cup at each meal. My friend had to pay $8 to top-up for a flask just so she could have more fluids, as a single cup just wasnâ??t enough for her.

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Post-hospitalisation support and freebies
While you shouldnâ??t choose a hospital JUST because it offers better freebies, it is always a good plus point if they do ð???



I was particularly drawn to TMCâ??s Breastfeeding Essentials Luggage, which is thoughtfully curated with items like:

- A multi-function diaper bag
- A cooler bag (for storing breastmilk when youâ??re out)
- A Hegen breast pump
- Breastmilk storage bags
- A box of Pigeon breast pads (for milk leakages)
- A nursing scarf
- A pack of nursing tea
- A memo board (to note babyâ??s feeding times)
- Calcium supplements
- A pack of maternity pads (for lochia)
- Feminine wash
- A breastfeeding guidebook

and more. This was pretty impressive because it contains many essentials that Iâ??ve been told to get in preparation for my breastfeeding journey. Of course, TMC allows you to bring home your babyâ??s bathtub and their swaddle blanket (with TMCâ??s logo) too!
Whereas at Mount Alvernia, the maternity package includes:

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- A pack of maternity pads
- 1 pack of baby diapers
- 1 pack of baby wipes
- Babyâ??s bathtub
- Maternity discharge bag
- Toiletry pouch with basic toiletries



Mount Alvernia bag.
Image credits

You can easily tell which was the more appealing one for me ð???

Discounts and incentives

Both fare well in this area, but TMC is slightly superior due to the wide variety of their merchant tie-ups.

The Mount Alverniaâ??s Ladies Card gives savings on single and 2-bedded rooms, as well as services at the hospital, but their partner privileges are lacking and the most compelling for me was probably just the complimentary baby shoot with Baby U Photo Studio (2 x 5â?³ by 5â?³ images and selected soft copies only).
On the other hand, TMC offers their First Born Incentive (FBI) and Subsequent Born Incentive (SBI) 2-year membership program, which helps to offset your room costs, doctorâ??s delivery fees, paediatricianâ??s consultation fees, diagnostic tests (unfortunately I didnâ??t get to utilize this even though I took my Oscar and FA scan tests with Thomson because I didnâ??t sign up early enough since I wasnâ??t yet sure of where I would be delivering in), as well as 10% off their family clinic and other services.
In addition, complimentary membership of their Celebrating Life is provided, where thereâ??s more merchant discounts with STRIP, Tim Ho Wan, Clarins, and more.

Insurance privileges
Both TMC and MAH offers complimentary insurance by Aviva, but I feel TMCâ??s one is more worthwhile as you get free medical insurance for your baby for 12 months, a free 6-month life insurance coverage of $25k for the mother (Avivaâ??s MyJoyfulBundle) and a free 6-month $10k personal accident plan. On the other hand, Mount Alverniaâ??s patients enjoy 6 months free of personal accident insurance for both parents and baby.

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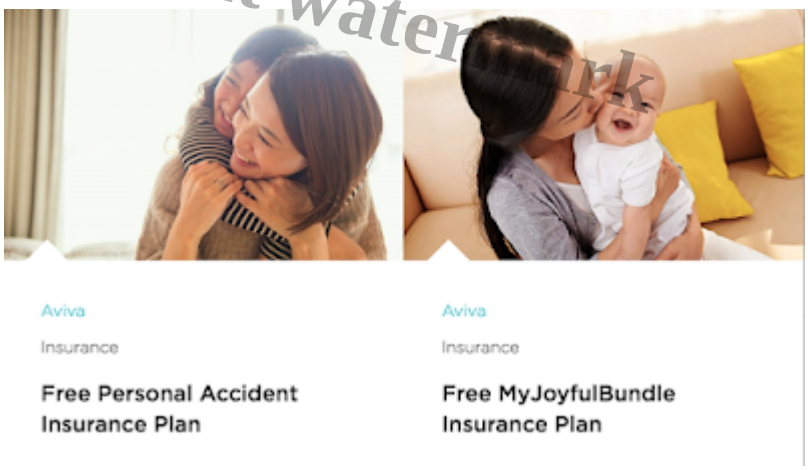

Other qualitative factors that we considered are listed out in the table below:

	Thomson Medical Centre	Mount Alvernia Hospital
Membership	$98	$68
No. of merchants	30	8
Bill discount	$100 off single-rooms	$100 off single-rooms
PD fees	5% (max. $100)	None
Carpark services	Valet	Ownself (but more lots)

Insurance	12 months medical insurance (baby) + $10k personal accident plan (mother) + $25k life insurance (mother)	6-month personal accident plan for mother, spouse and baby.
Breastfeeding support	Dr. Wong Boh Boi (aka â??the baby whispererâ?	Sister Kang
Goodie bag	• Breastfeeding Essentials Luggage + baby bathtub	Discharge bag + baby bathtub

Hospital Tour
I didnâ??t manage to document my experience during MAHâ??s hospital tour as my husband couldnâ??t make it at the last minute so I went alone and had no extra hands to take photos or record videos, but you can view my TMC hospital tour experience here! (includes a video of the delivery suite).

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Why I eventually chose to deliver in Thomson Medical Centre

In case you didnâ??t manage to read through the entire breakdown above, the TLDR summary of reasons why I decided on TMC over MAH eventually are:

- Affordable among the various private hospitals
- Homely and comfortable atmosphere (no â??sick patientâ?• vibes)
- Experienced and helpful nurses
- The only private hospital with the option for hydrotherapy and water birth
- Strong breastfeeding and lactation support via their ParentCraft Centre and support helpline
- Comfortable rooms (feels more like a staycation than a hospital!)
- Really good food during the stay
- Better insurance offering by Aviva
- Super attractive (and practical / useful) goodie bag upon discharge
- Benefits of being a TMC member (lots of merchant tie-ups for discounts)
- Discounts on my selected babyâ??s PD

Thatâ??s it for my review! I hope this helps, and Iâ??ll update shortly as Iâ??ve only just delivered my little baby a few days ago. Will write more once I find some time to share about my birthing experience in Thomson Medical Centre, and will share more photos then ð???

In the meantime, motherhood duties calls!

With love,
Budget Babe

Category

1. Family
2. Pregnancy

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