

Healthy pregnancy, healthy baby

A pregnancy book for Aboriginal
women of the Northern Territory

health.nt.gov.au



Australian Government



**NORTHERN
TERRITORY**
GOVERNMENT

The book has been produced in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and men.

Thank you to all the people involved in the development and review of this book.

This book includes women's business.

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Before you are pregnant

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Get checked

Before you become pregnant it is important that your body and mind are healthy and strong. This helps you have a strong, healthy baby. It is also important that your partner is healthy. Make sure you both have a full health check every year at the health centre.

Healthy eating

If you or your partner are overweight or too skinny this can make it harder to get pregnant. Being overweight or too skinny can also cause problems for you and the baby while you are pregnant.

Some special food parts

Foods are made up of many parts, some of these are very small (micronutrients). It is important for babies to have enough of these small parts to grow well. The best way to make sure your baby has enough micronutrients is for you to eat healthy foods before you get pregnant.



Folic acid

Getting enough folic acid before you are pregnant can make you more likely to have a healthy baby. Women who are trying to get pregnant should have one folic acid tablet each day. You can get folic acid tablets at a chemist or ask your health centre. You should also eat foods with lots of folic acid like green leafy vegetables and oranges.

Iron

It is common for women who are trying to get pregnant to have low iron levels in their body. Iron is important because it helps your baby's brain work well when it is born. A blood test can tell you if you have enough iron. It is good to do this before you get pregnant because it can take some time for the iron in your blood to increase. You may need to take some tablets or have an injection if your iron is low.

You can get extra iron from foods like:



Iodine

Your baby will need iodine to grow. Iodine is added to some foods, like bread. Pregnant women need extra

iodine. So if you are thinking about getting pregnant you should have an iodine tablet each day.



Get active

Try to be active every day. Any exercise is better than none. Exercise will help

you feel good, sleep well and be healthy. Exercise will also keep your body strong for pregnancy and birth.



Get up to date with needles

- You may need some immunisations before you are pregnant.
- This can help keep you healthy and help stop your baby from getting very sick.



Stay away from smokes and ganga

You, your partner or someone around you smoking causes harm to your unborn child. Smoking might make it harder to get pregnant. Or when you do get pregnant your baby may have big troubles.

So think about if you can:

- quit smoking
- cut down smoking
- spend less time around other people smoking.

Health centre staff can help you quit or you can call the Quitline on 13 78 48.



Don't drink grog

Alcohol can hurt your baby even before you know you are pregnant. So don't drink alcohol if you are trying to get pregnant.



Check your teeth

Healthy teeth and gums are important before, during and after you are pregnant. So try to make sure you and your partner go to the dentist every year.

If you have diabetes...

Getting your sugars good (controlled) before you are pregnant can help you and your baby stay safe when you are pregnant. If you have diabetes, talk to someone at your health centre about what you can do. Try to go to the health clinic 3-6 months before trying to get pregnant.

If you take medicine...

Not all medications are safe to take when you are pregnant. Ask your doctor if you need to change medications while trying to get pregnant, or when you find out you are pregnant.

Get an STI check

You can get a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) from having sex with someone who has that infection. You might not know because many STIs do not make you feel or look different. Even if you feel well, STIs can harm you and your baby. Checking before you become pregnant is best so STIs can be treated. If you have an infection your partner will also need to be treated. Syphilis can cause serious harm to babies. Pregnant women should get tested for syphilis before, during and after their baby is born.



Using condoms can help protect you and your baby from STIs.

Signs you might be pregnant

People feel different things when they are pregnant. So if you are not sure go to the health centre. Some signs are:

- sore breasts
- breasts larger than normal
- feeling more tired than normal
- needing to pee (urinate) more than normal
- feeling like you want to vomit (nausea)
- vomiting
- missing your normal bleed (period).

When should I go to the health centre for pregnancy (antenatal) checks?

As soon as you think you may be pregnant. If you miss a bleed or feel unwell it is important to check on your health and body to make sure everything is ok.

Your options when you are pregnant

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Congratulations!

You are pregnant. This can be a very exciting time for some women. For other women it can be confusing or even scary. This book has a lot of information about being pregnant and giving birth.

You have a choice

Some women know exactly what they want to do when they find out they are pregnant. For others this is a big, difficult decision. Health centre staff can explain more about your different choices and give you more information on pregnancy choices and termination.

Visiting the health centre

You can go to the health centre by yourself, or take someone with you. This can be anyone: your partner, mother, grandmother, sister or friend.

The health centre staff will answer your questions. They will also be able to tell you how well your baby is growing and help you and your baby to be strong and healthy.

If you are not sure ask

There is a lot going on when you are pregnant. You might have lots of questions. Ask at the health centre if there is anything you are not sure about.

Your choices affect your baby

Now you are pregnant every choice you make will affect your baby. The baby's father and your family also make choices that affect your baby. Ask how they are feeling and how they can help with your pregnancy and the baby.

The first person I told I was pregnant was

It is important to tell someone you trust that you are pregnant.

The season will be:

My baby's scan pictures (ultrasound):

Healthy living when you are pregnant

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Reminder

bring your pregnancy record to all your appointments

Stay active

Exercising every day keeps you and your baby healthy.

Walking and swimming are good when you are pregnant.

If you were doing lots of exercise before you got pregnant you can keep doing many of the same activities. You can continue most exercise while it is still comfortable.

Sex is safe when you are pregnant as long as you are comfortable and you or your partner do not have a sexually transmitted infection (STI).

Every woman and every pregnancy is different, if you are not sure about exercise, ask at your health centre.

Exercise every day for:

- stronger muscles
- better sleep
- feel better
- more energy
- less anxious
- less pain
- less leg cramps
- less swelling and
- less constipation.

Tips for exercising

- ✓ You are exercising at the right level if you can keep talking while you exercise.
- ✓ Choose a cooler time of the day to exercise so that you don't overheat.

Stay away from:

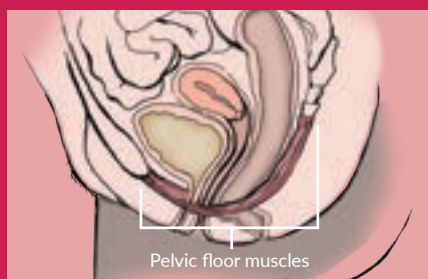
- bouncing
- contact sports (like AFL, rugby, netball, basketball)
- twisting and turning activities
- sit-ups
- any movement that causes pain.

Your pelvic floor

All pregnant women should try and do pelvic floor exercises every day.

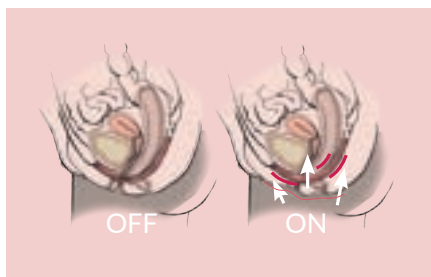
Where is my pelvic floor?

The pelvic floor is the layer of muscle and tissue that makes up the bottom of your pelvis, between your thighs.



What does my pelvic floor do?

- supports your organs
- closes and opens the wee tube (urethra)
- closes and opens where you poo (the anus)
- helps you move
- helps you have sex.



How do I turn my pelvic floor on?

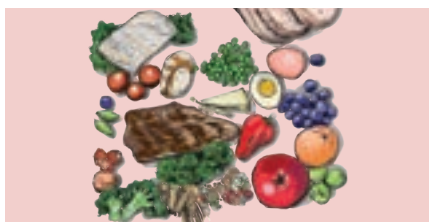
To turn on the pelvic floor you lift and squeeze the same way that you would stop yourself doing a wee, or hold a fart in. It is like trying to grip something inside your vagina.

How do I exercise my pelvic floor?

Do pelvic floor exercises 3 times a day:

- relax your bottom, tummy, back and legs
- don't hold your breath
- lift and squeeze your pelvic floor
- practice 10 quick, strong, big lifts
- practice 10 long holds of 10 seconds each.

If you are not sure what pelvic floor exercises are speak to someone at your health centre or watch a video online: www.pelvicfloorfirst.org.au/pages/videos.html



Eat healthy

Eating well will help keep you and your growing baby healthy. You need good foods everyday to help your baby grow well.

Eat lots of:

- ✓ well cooked meat, chicken and fish
- ✓ well washed green leafy vegetables (like broccoli) and other vegetables
- ✓ fruit
- ✓ low fat dairy foods like milk, yoghurt and hard cheese
- ✓ nuts and seeds
- ✓ well cooked eggs.



These foods give you many important food parts (nutrients), like iron, calcium, folate, protein and iodine. The food parts (nutrients) help your baby grow a healthy body and brain.



Drink plenty of water. Drinking tea with food stops iron getting into the body, which can make your blood weak (anaemia). So drink tea between meals only.



Fish

It is great to eat fish when you are pregnant.

Fish has:

- protein to help your baby grow
- omega 3 to help your baby's brain develop and to help your baby be born at the right time.



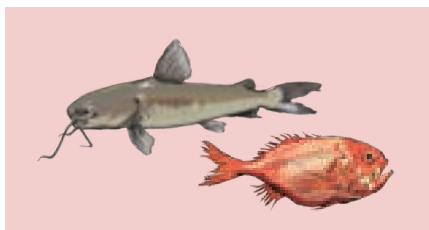
Some fish has tiny bits of rubbish (heavy metals) in it too. This can be a problem, but only if you have too much.

You want to get the good stuff (nutrients) and not too much of the rubbish (heavy metals).



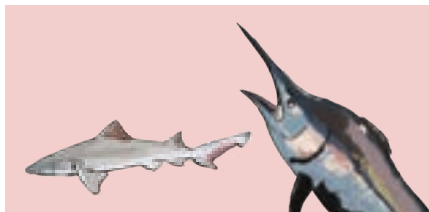
Barramundi, snapper, red emperor, jewfish, tinned tuna and bream are the best choices.

If you are pregnant you can enjoy these fish 2 or 3 times per week.



Some fish like catfish and sea perch have a bit of rubbish (heavy metals).

You can eat these fish but only once each week. If you eat these fish don't eat any other fish that week.



Stay away from large fish like shark or marlin because these fish have the most rubbish (heavy metals).

If you are going to eat these fish only eat a small bit and only once every 2 weeks.



Drinking alcohol is not safe during pregnancy

When you are pregnant, baby's brain and body is developing fast inside you. Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs can stop it growing well.

Drinking alcohol or taking drugs when you are pregnant can make big worries all your child's life like:

- ✗ baby has behaviour troubles
- ✗ baby's face is the wrong shape, looks different
- ✗ baby is slow to grow
- ✗ baby is slow to learn.

Drinking alcohol while you are pregnant can cause Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).



Not drinking alcohol or using other drugs while you are pregnant means:

- ✓ healthy baby that grows up strong
- ✓ baby learns and develops like other kids
- ✓ happier family
- ✓ better relationships
- ✓ family grows strong
- ✓ everybody healthier and happier.



Tips for stopping alcohol or other drugs:

- do other things you enjoy
- stay with non-drinkers and spend time with other mums who don't drink or smoke or use drugs
- spend time with your family and children who don't drink or smoke
- tell your family "doctor's orders, no drinking with a baby."

If someone asks you to drink say, "doctor says if I drink it hurts my baby."

Respect

You have the right to feel safe and respected. Violence and abuse is never OK. If you feel unsafe or if you want to talk about family violence call this helpline 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) or talk to your midwife or strong women's worker.

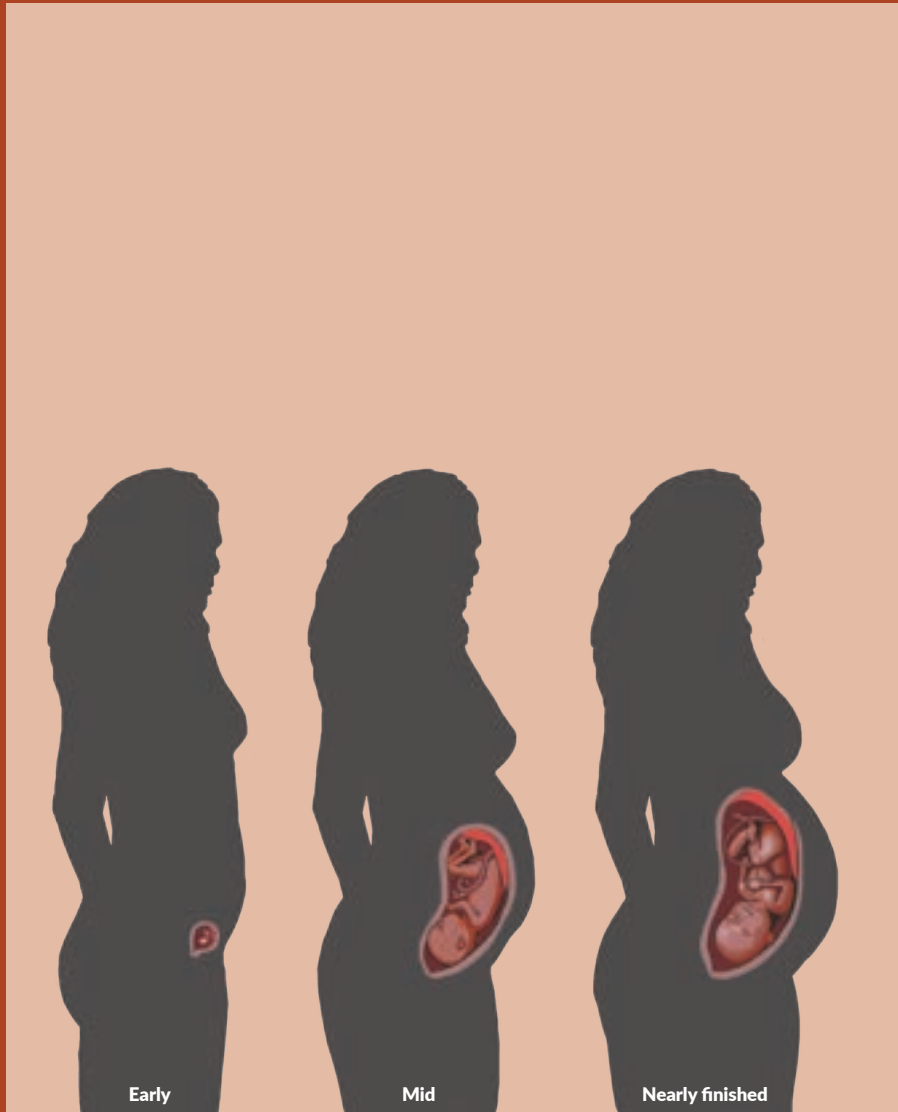
Stages of pregnancy

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Stages of pregnancy

Pregnancy has 3 stages (trimesters)

- Early pregnancy (1st trimester) (0-13 weeks) 0 - 3 months
- Mid Pregnancy (2nd trimester) (14-26 weeks) 3½ - 6 months
- Nearly finished (3rd trimester) (27-40 weeks), 6½ - 9 months





When should I go to the health centre for pregnancy (antenatal) checks

- ✓ Once a month until you are 28 weeks (7 months) pregnant
- ✓ Once a fortnight between 7-9 months (29-36 weeks) pregnant
- ✓ Every week after you are 9 months (36 weeks) pregnant
- ✓ Any time that you feel unwell or sad about yourself or your baby.

If there is a problem with going to the health centre talk to the staff about where you want to have your pregnancy (antenatal) check.

Pregnancy (antenatal) checks are important for you and your baby's health.



Pregnancy (antenatal) checks

The midwife will work out about when your baby is due.

They will also ask some questions and ask if they can:

- Take your blood pressure.
- Check your weight and height.
- Listen to your heart and lungs.
- Check your gums and teeth. Gum and teeth infections can harm your baby. Tell your health worker if you have any problems with your gums or teeth.
- Feel and measure your tummy to check how big your baby is.
- Listen to your tummy to hear your baby's heartbeat.
- Check if you are up to date with your immunisations.
- Do a women's check. This is a pap smear (cervical screening test) and swabs from near the baby bag (uterus). This test is to check everything inside is okay and you don't have any infections.
- Take some blood to test your iron and sugar levels and what your blood group is. These blood tests also check for infections.
- Test your urine for infections and kidney problems.
- At some visits you will be asked if you feel safe at home.

Ask questions

Remember you can ask questions. Let the health staff know any problems or worries, so they can help you.

Your midwife, nurse or health worker will give you a Hand Held Pregnancy Record.

Some things the midwife will talk about at your first pregnancy (antenatal) check:



Problems when you are pregnant

Some sickness can be a problem for you or your baby if you do not get the right treatment. You may not know that you have problems so the health staff will do some tests to find out. That way you can get the right medicine and information to keep you and your baby well.

Diabetes

If your blood sugar goes high while you are pregnant it's called gestational diabetes. High sugars can:

- hurt your baby
- mean your baby gets diabetes when they grow up
- mean your baby may be large but not strong and needs extra care for a few days when he or she is born.

If you have diabetes while you are pregnant you can take medicine to help your sugars stay at a good level. You can also control your sugars by eating healthy food and being active. This can help your baby to be strong even if you have diabetes while you are pregnant.



High blood pressure (pre-eclampsia)

When you are pregnant high blood pressure can give you fits (seizures). This will affect your kidneys, heart, liver and brain. If you become very sick with high blood pressure you may need to have your baby a couple of weeks before he or she is due. Having your baby early is important to keep you both safe and stop you from having these problems.



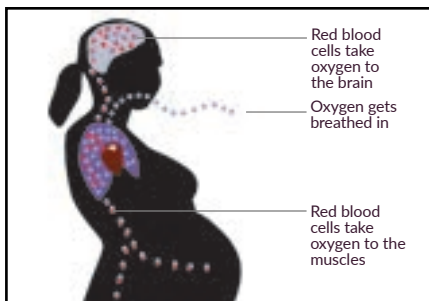
Slow growth (intrauterine growth restriction)

The baby is skinny, weak and may have trouble breathing when he or she is born. You may need to have your baby a few weeks early if he or she is not growing inside you anymore. Once your baby is born they should start to grow normally.

If you have any of these or other illnesses you will need to visit the health centre more often. They will be able to talk to you about this and explain what to do and how to keep you and your baby well.

Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)

Syphilis is a serious infection that can cause miscarriage or stillbirth. It is very important STIs are detected and treated during pregnancy so it is best if you and your partner are tested often.



Anaemia

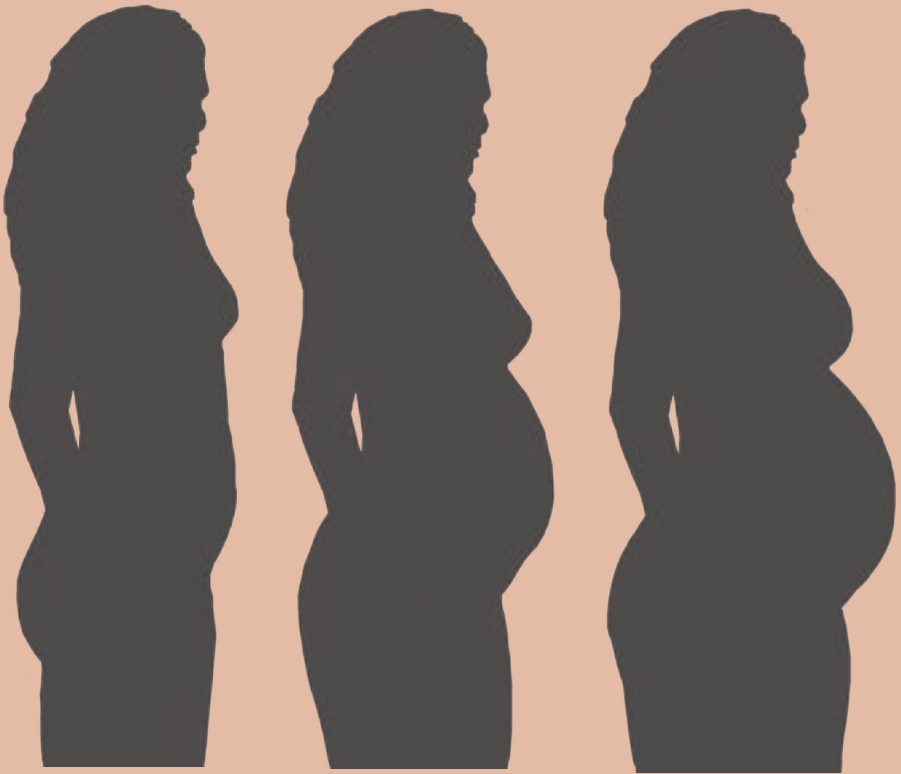
Anaemia is when there is not enough iron in the blood.

Iron in the blood helps air get from the lung to where it is needed in the body; like a car helping people get from one place to another.



Hepatitis B (Hep B)

Hep B can be passed on to a baby during pregnancy so it is important to know if you have it. Your blood will tell the story. You will have this test on your first visit. Some women with Hep B need to have tablet medicine from 28 weeks to help protect their baby. Your baby may need extra needles in their first year to stop Hep B from passing to them.



Early pregnancy

(1st trimester or stage)

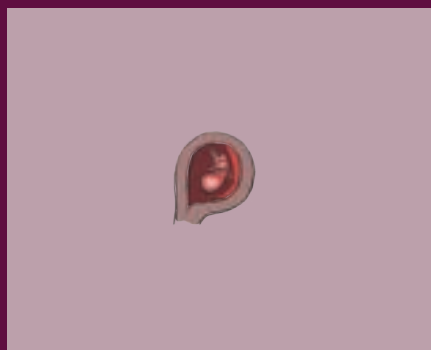
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You can have an early dating scan (first ultrasound scan) when you are between 6-12 weeks pregnant. An ultrasound scan takes photos of the baby through your tummy.

This scan:

- checks that your baby is growing in the right place
- checks that your baby is developing well
- helps work out your baby's age and estimated due date.

How big is your baby now?



4-6 weeks - baby is tiny about the size of a poppy seed; about half a centimeter long (smaller than your little finger nail). The brain and spinal cord are developing.



8 weeks (2 months) - baby is growing longer and you can now see fingers and toes developing. It is about the size of a grape.



12 weeks (3 months) - baby is about 5cm long (about as long as your little finger). It is now about the size of a lime.

He or she is starting to move but you will not feel these movements yet.

The first person who noticed I was pregnant was

Changes to your body

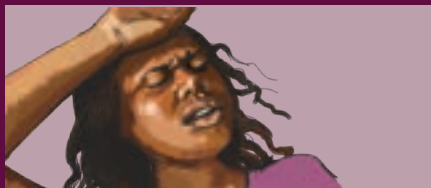
Changes that you might feel during the early part of your pregnancy and tips on feeling better:



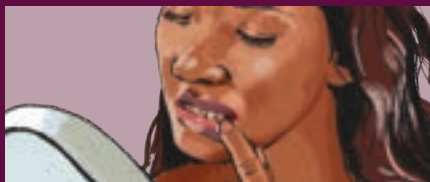
- Your breasts can get sensitive, sore and bigger. Wearing a bra that fits well and does not have a wire can help.



- You might feel sick (morning sickness). Eating often in the day can help with this.



- You might feel sick, tired and a bit cranky. Try to rest sometimes during the day and go to bed early at night. If you feel faint have some food or water.



- When you are pregnant your gums can bleed easily.
- Brush your teeth morning and night with a soft tooth brush to keep your gums from bleeding.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.
- Try to see a dentist once while you are pregnant to make sure your mouth is healthy.



- Peeing often (frequent urine). As your baby grows, the changes to your body make you want to wee more often.

Miscarriage

A miscarriage is when the baby dies before it is born. Miscarriages are more common in early pregnancy. If you have these problems you might be having a miscarriage:

- cramps
- pain in your back or belly
- stop feeling pregnancy signs (like vomiting)
- passing white or pink mucus
- passing blood.

Go to the health centre as soon as possible if you think you have these problems.

NT Mental Health Line 1800 682 288

Middle pregnancy (2nd trimester or stage)

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How big is my baby now?

(14 - 26 weeks)



14 weeks - 3 ½ months

Baby is now about the size of a lemon or as big as your fist. He or she now has fingers and toes and is developing very quickly.



20 weeks - 5 months

Baby is starting to grow hair, develop touch, taste and smell. He or she is as long as a banana. You might be feeling your baby move now.



26 weeks - 6 months

Baby is now longer than your forearm, the size of a cabbage. The brain is still developing but most organs like the heart and kidneys can now function.

Changes you may feel

You should start to feel better in middle pregnancy. As baby gets bigger there are some more changes that can happen to your body.

Itchy skin

Rubbing moisturising cream or bush medicine into the skin may help to stop the itch. You might notice 'lines' or 'stretch marks' on your tummy and breasts.

The first time I felt my baby moving was



Baby is moving

You will now feel baby moving. Your baby's movements matter.



Hard poo (constipation)

You might find it hard to do a poo. Some exercise, drinking lots of water and eating fruit and vegetables every day helps. You might need to see the health staff about getting some medicine to help you do a poo.



Blood pouches around your bottom (haemorrhoids/piles)

This happens when veins in your bottom get swollen. It can hurt when you go to the toilet, or you might see blood after you have done a poo. Having soft poo will help if you have piles. See your midwife or doctor for some cream (ointment) to stop the pain and the itching.



Trouble sleeping

Sleeping can be more difficult – staying active during the day can help you rest well at night. Trying to make yourself comfortable might also help.

You should lie on your side. Use pillows between your legs or under your belly to make yourself more comfortable.

Tests in middle pregnancy

Baby scan (Ultrasound)

You can have an ultrasound scan when you are about 18 - 20 weeks pregnant. An ultrasound scan takes picture of the baby through your tummy.

This scan:

- Looks at the size and shape of your baby's body parts.
- Shows where the afterbirth (placenta) is in the baby bag (uterus).
- Can show some problems with how your baby is growing and developing.

Ask if you want to know your baby's gender.

If you live in a remote community you may have to travel to town (Alice Springs, Katherine or Darwin) to have this test. The midwife will arrange your travel and stay in town.

Other tests

At 24 weeks it is time to have more tests to check you and your baby are well. These include:

- blood tests for low iron (weak blood)
- blood test for sugar (diabetes)
- blood tests for syphilis and HIV
- women's check: you or your midwife can do this. It means putting a swab in your vagina.

Sugar (diabetes) test

You need to fast overnight before you have this test. "Fasting" means you should not eat anything from the time you eat dinner the day before the test until after the test. Only drink water. At the health centre the midwife or nurse will take some blood, give you a sweet drink and take some more blood 1 and 2 hours later. The midwife or nurse will ask you not to eat and to stay in the health centre until the test is finished.

Needles (immunisations)

Check you have had all the ones you need.



Warning signs

As your baby grows there are some things that can be very harmful to either you or your baby. You should go to the health centre or the hospital if any of these happens:

- Bleeding from the vagina
- Any fluid coming from the vagina, especially if it is smelly, brown or green in colour
- Your baby stops moving - your baby's movements matter
- You have strong, painful baby pains (contractions)
- You wee (urine) often and it is smelly or burns
- You have bad or unusual headaches
- You have problems with your eyes (sight) or are seeing spots
- You have a fit (seizure)
- You are very worried or scared and don't know what is happening.



Nearly finished

(3rd trimester or stage)

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How big is my baby now?



28-32 weeks – 6 ½ to 8 months

Baby is completely formed, growing bigger and becoming very active. Your baby is now as big as a coconut.



32-40 weeks – 8-9 months

Baby should be laying head down ready to be born soon. Your baby is the size of a pineapple, not long now!

Changes you may feel

Now that your baby is getting very big you may start to feel uncomfortable. Here are some common issues and what to do to feel more comfortable.



Backache

Stand straight and tall and rest when you need to. Use a pillow to support your legs and tummy when you lay down.



A burning pain in the middle of your chest (heartburn)

Eating small meals can help. Use 2 pillows to sleep.



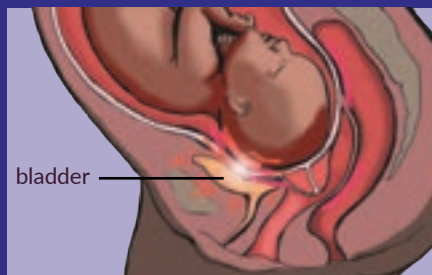
Leg cramps

Stretch your muscles by pulling your toes towards your knees.



Swollen ankles and feet

Put your feet up when you are resting, try swimming.



Weeing often (frequent urination)

Your baby is so big now there is not much room for your bladder. Drink small amounts of water often.



Mild baby pains

These are called Braxton Hicks contractions. They are small tightenings of the tummy that help you get ready for when baby is going to be born. Try to relax.

Needles (immunisations)

You will be given whooping cough (pertussis) and flu immunisations. It is important that your partner and family are also immunised. This helps prevent your baby getting these sicknesses when they are a newborn.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

A month before your baby is due, blood tests, urine and swabs are taken again. Syphilis can seriously harm your baby but is easy to treat. It's important to be tested 4 times during your pregnancy to keep your baby safe.

Getting ready for baby

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Things to know

As it gets closer to the end of your pregnancy it is important to get ready for the birth of your baby.

Talk to other mothers, grandmothers, aunties and health staff about how you feel and what might happen when you give birth.



Speak to Centrelink before you go into town about payments when your baby is born. There are different kinds of payments when you have a baby. You can organise this 3 months before your baby is due.

When you are pregnant you can register with Medicare as a family or couple. It might save you money on some of your health costs, especially when you give birth.



If you are worried about going to town by yourself ask the midwife to help you arrange for someone to go with you.

If you are living in a remote community - if everything is normal, you will be asked to go to town 2 weeks before your baby is due (38 weeks). Make sure you arrange someone you trust to look after your other children at home. It is better not to bring children to the hospital.

The midwife will arrange your transport to town and your appointments. They will also find you somewhere to stay.

Ask about the different places to stay. You can often choose where you want to stay including with family in town.



If you are living in town - when you think your baby is coming you can phone the hospital and tell them what is happening. They will be able to tell you if it is time to go to the hospital.

What to take to town and to hospital

If you are going to town to have your baby here are some items you might need. Some ladies bring these things with them to town, other ladies bring just a few things and bring money to buy extra things when they arrive.



- Money
- Medicare card
- Healthcare card
- Tax file number
- Basics card
- Clothes and shoes for you: bring clothes you can easily breast feed in after you have had the baby. You will need more than one set of clothes including underwear.
- Bring something warm, it is cold in the hospital.
- Soap, hairbrush, shampoo or other toiletries
- Pads for after you give birth
- Mobile phone, charger and phone numbers for family
- Medications - if you need them
- Hand held pregnancy record
- Clothes, nappies and blanket to take baby home.

Tip

Ask your health centre about information about where to go when you get to the hospital and for a letter about your health and pregnancy.





Baby is
coming

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Most babies are born near the time they are due, but some come early or late.

If you have already had 1 or more babies you might have a shorter birth (labour) this time.

You will know baby is coming soon if:

- ✓ Mucous or water comes out of your vagina.
- ✓ You have regular baby pains (contractions) that get stronger.
- ✓ You feel like there is a lot of pressure down low in the vagina. It feels like you want to do a poo. This means your baby's head might be ready to come out.

What happens at the hospital?

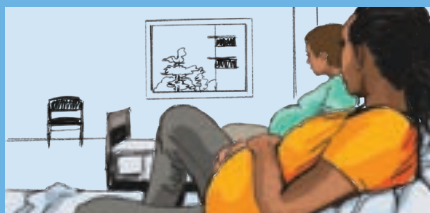
You may need to fill out some papers. The Aboriginal health worker or liaison officer will offer to help you with this.

The midwife will ask how you are feeling:

- What are your baby pains (contractions) like?
- When did they start?
- Do you have had any blood or fluids coming from your vagina?



She will feel your tummy. She will check how strong and close together the contractions are. She will check how far down in your tummy baby is. By doing this she can work out if your baby is ready to be born.



Where do you go when you are not giving birth (in labour)?

The antenatal ward is where you stay in hospital before baby is born. You may share a room with up to 3 other women. Most hospitals have a TV in each room, a kitchen where you can make a cup of tea and a shop. You can usually answer phone calls on the ward phone. You will need to use your mobile phone to make outgoing calls.

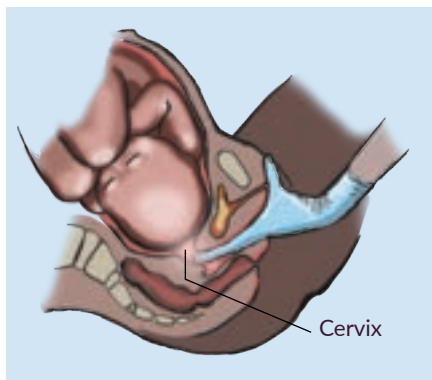


There are a lot of different staff – most hospitals have an Aboriginal liaison officer or Aboriginal health worker. They will help you with any of the things you do not understand. Ask if you need help.



Where do you go if you are giving birth (in labour)?

This is where your baby is born. You will have a room to yourself, and the midwife will stay with you when baby is close to coming. If everything goes well, you and your baby will only stay in the labour ward for a few hours.



If you are having your baby (in labour):

The midwife might do a 'women's check' to check how much the neck of your baby bag (cervix) has opened for baby to come out.

Giving birth (labour)



Birth choices

You can have your partner, family or friends in with you when you are having your baby.

You can ask for dim lighting or to play music in the room. Talk to the midwife about what type of pain relief you would like when you are in labour.



What is pain relief?

Pain relief is something that reduces pain. There is natural pain relief like a massage or a hot shower. At some hospitals you can have your baby in a bath which helps with the pain.

There are also different types of medicines. You can also ask the midwife about using the gas or having an epidural.

Making a birth plan

It is good to talk to your partner and midwife about how you would like to give birth before you are in labour. Many things in labour can be your choice. For example, listening to music, your position or deep breathing to get through pain. Some things might not be your choice; if you are very unwell the doctors might have to make a choice for you.

It is your choice what sort of pain medication you have.

How can dads or birth partners help?

You can tell your partner what sort of help or pain medication you would prefer when you are giving birth. This can help because you might not feel like talking much if you are in pain.

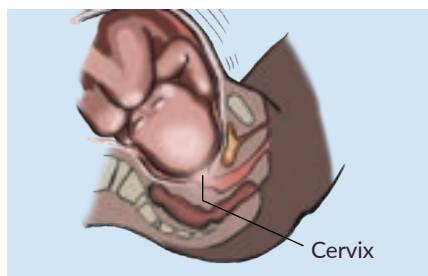
Tell your birth partner to remind the midwife if you want to delay the cutting of the cord between you and your baby after birth (delayed cord clamping, page 45).

Some women might have a choice to give birth through the vagina or through a baby operation (caesarean).

It is really good to make a plan but sometimes birth will not always follow your plan.

3 parts of giving birth (labour)

Giving birth (labour) has 3 parts (stages)



1st stage

The muscles around the baby bag (uterus) squeeze to push baby down against the opening (cervix). This slowly stretches the opening (cervix) until it is fully open (dilated). Then the baby can come down into your vagina.



This can last for up to 8 - 12 hours. Some ways to cope with the first stage are to walk around, try a massage or a hot shower. Try different movements to get comfortable. If these do not work, you can ask for the gas or an epidural.

How your birth partner can help:

- rub your back
- keep children and other visitors away
- bring you ice or drinks, organise food
- help you move around if you want to
- play some nice music.

At the end of this part of labour your baby pains get stronger and closer together. If you feel like you need to do a poo or push baby out it means that your baby will be born very soon. It is normal for women to do a poo or a wee when giving birth.



2nd stage

The opening to the baby bag (cervix) is now completely open (fully dilated). You might feel a lot of pressure around your bottom and then a burning sensation. Although your contractions slow down the feeling like you want to push gets stronger. This stage can last up to two hours, but can be quicker if you have had a baby before.



Once baby's head has come out the rest of baby's body usually comes out with the next one or two pains.



Placing your baby on your chest - with your skin touching your baby's skin - will help your baby find your breast and feed when they are ready. This usually happens in the first hour after they have been born.



3rd stage

This is when the afterbirth (placenta) comes out. It can take up to an hour. The midwife will offer to give you a needle (syntocinon) to help the afterbirth to come out quickly.

If you want to keep your afterbirth (placenta) for cultural or personal reasons you can. Make sure you tell your midwife if this is something you want to do.

Delayed cord clamping

The cord between mum and baby (umbilical cord) has blood in it even after the baby is outside the mum. "Delayed cord clamping" means waiting to cut the cord for 1-3 minutes after the baby is born. This can be good for the baby as it can help them get more iron to keep them strong. If you want to have "delayed cord clamping" put this in your birth plan and remind your midwife while you are in early labour.



You will stay in the labour ward for a couple of hours while the midwife checks you and your baby are okay. The midwife will ask your permission to give your baby a Vitamin K needle when he or she is born. Vitamin K helps stop your baby from having any bleeding problems after birth. The midwife will also weigh and measure your baby.

Baby operation/Caesarean Section (C-section)

This operation helps if your baby cannot be born through your vagina. If you agree the midwife will take you to the operating theatre. There a doctor will give you a special pain medicine (anaesthetic). Then you will get a small cut in your belly to let the doctor get baby out.

There are 2 types of special pain medicine (anaesthetic):



Epidural - the doctor puts a needle in your back and gives some medication through the needle. This means you can't feel your tummy, lower back and legs.

If you have an epidural you are covered with a sheet and won't see the cut, but you can cuddle and feed baby as soon as she or he is born.



General anaesthetic - medicine gets put into your arm to make you go to sleep.

If you have a general anaesthetic you will not wake up until after your baby is born. The midwife will take your baby to the nursery and look after him or her until you are awake.



Your baby is here
(postnatal)

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Babies all look different



Some babies are covered in fine hair. Some have a white sticky coating on their skin. Some can be born with peeling skin.



If your baby was born by suction he or she may have a long cone shaped head or some swelling (cephal-haematoma).



These things are all normal and go away by themselves.

The hospital after your baby's born (postnatal ward)

You might stay in hospital for a couple of days after your baby is born. This is a good time to rest and get to know your baby.



The midwives will check your uterus (baby bag) is getting smaller like it should. They will also check that you do not bleed too much or get any infections.

They will check baby:

- is breathing properly
- is weeing and pooing
- for infections.



The midwives can help you with breastfeeding and bathing your baby before you go home. You don't need to bath your baby on the day they are born.



You will be asked if your baby can have the Hepatitis B needle (immunisation). Hepatitis can cause serious health problems. Hepatitis B vaccine protects your baby from Hepatitis.



On the third day the midwife will ask if she can take some blood from baby's heel (neonatal screening test). This is a test for some other diseases. You can ask the midwife about these diseases. Baby can have this test done at home if you leave the hospital before it is done.



You will be asked if your baby can have a hearing test (screen) before you go home. Good hearing helps baby with speech and language. This test does not hurt your baby.

Register your baby:

- with Centrelink
- with Medicare
- for a birth certificate.

The Aboriginal liaison officer or health worker can help you with this.

You will need your Medicare card and Tax File Number.

Breastfeeding is the natural way to feed your baby

Breast milk is the natural and best food for your baby.

Reasons to breastfeed:

- ✓ It has all the goodness baby needs until they are ready to eat solid food as well (around 6 months old).
- ✓ Helps baby fight infections.
- ✓ Helps baby stay strong and healthy.
- ✓ It is free.
- ✓ It changes to meet your baby's needs as he or she grows.
- ✓ You can feed anywhere, any time.
- ✓ There is no mess and no waste.
- ✓ Helps your baby's brain develop and grow.
- ✓ Helps you and baby know each other.
- ✓ It is easy on baby's tummy (easily digested).
- ✓ Helps delay (but will not stop) a new pregnancy.
- ✓ It can help you lose pregnancy weight.



Getting started

Sometimes it can be hard to get started with breastfeeding. The midwives or lactation consultant will help you start. Your mothers, aunties and family may be able to help. You can also phone the Australian Breastfeeding Association helpline (1800 686 268).

You can breastfeed a new baby and keep breastfeeding your older child. Make sure you feed your new baby first when she or he is hungry. Feed your toddler or older child when the new baby has had enough.



The first milk (colostrum) is only a small amount but is very strong. The first milk (colostrum) is a thick milk that is good for baby to stay healthy (keeps baby's immune system strong). It is normal for your baby to lose a little weight in the first few days.

A bit later (around the third day after you give birth) you will get a different type of milk. There will be more of it so your breast might become fuller. This milk will be whiter.

At the start of the breastfeed the milk helps satisfy your baby's thirst. As the feed goes on the milk has more fat. This satisfies the baby's hunger. Feed the baby on the first breast until baby wants to stop. Then offer the second breast. Your baby may feed for a shorter time on this side so next time start on this breast.

Sometimes your breasts feel soft even when you have plenty of milk. The best ways to tell if you are feeding enough:

- Is your baby pooing enough (their poo should be yellow after the first one or two days)?

- Is your baby making enough wee?
- Is your baby growing?
- Is your baby happy after a feed?

Most of the time your midwife and child nurse can help you answer these questions if you are not sure.

Breastfeeding positions

You can feed your baby in your arms, lying down or like a "football".



The best way to feed your baby is the way that feels comfortable for you and your baby.

The more you breast feed the more milk you will have.

Baby is feeding well when they have:

- ✓ A wide open mouth.
- ✓ Their chin on your breast.
- ✓ Mouth that is full of breast.
- ✓ Lips turning out.
- ✓ Nose is turned up away from the breast.
- ✓ After a feed your breast feels softer and emptier.

Early problems

Problem

Try

Milk slow to come in	Keep breastfeeding as more breastfeeding makes more milk. Talk to the midwife about increasing your milk supply.
Sore, cracked nipples	Put more of the breast in baby's mouth. Express breast milk and put it on your nipple. There are also some creams that can help. (What's expressing? See below).
Swollen, hard, sore, lumpy, very full breasts	Massage the lumps in the shower. Put something warm on your breast before you feed. Put something cold on your breast after you feed. Talk to a lactation consultant, midwife or child health nurse to check your feeding. Keep breastfeeding often.

What is mastitis?

This is an infection in your breast. You might feel like you have the flu or have a fever. You may also feel stinging or pain in your breasts. It is important you go to your health centre early as you may need antibiotics.



Things that help you “express”

- Having your baby near you.
- Touching your baby's skin.
- Feeling relaxed.
- Putting something warm on your breasts.
- Massaging your breasts gently.
- If you express with a machine make sure the plastic piece fits your breast.

Artificial feeding (infant formula)

Artificial baby milk or infant formula is not the same as breast milk. If you are not giving your baby breast milk, artificial milk (infant formula) is the only safe food for your baby. Talk to the midwife if you're thinking about using formula.



Getting breast milk from your breasts for baby (expressing breastmilk)

If you're not going to feed your baby from your breast you can “express” breast milk. This means you can use a machine or your hands to get the milk out of your breast. You can give the milk to the baby later from a teaspoon, cup, syringe or a bottle.

It may make babies sick if not prepared properly. It is important to prepare formula safely every time. The midwives or health workers can help you choose the right formula and how to prepare it safely. The strength of the formula is important.



Talk to your midwife or child health nurse about:

- how strong to make the formula
- how often to feed your baby
- how much to give.



If you are feeding your baby from a bottle you need to sterilise (clean) the bottles and teats very carefully.

If you are going to use formula feed, you will need at least one tin of formula each week for your newborn baby.



The baby nursery

There are many reasons babies may need to go to the nursery in the hospital such as:

- baby is born too early

- baby's lungs or other organs are not strong enough
- baby is small and weak
- baby cannot suck properly
- you had diabetes while you were pregnant
- you were taking harmful drugs while you were pregnant
- you are too sick to look after your baby.
- you had a baby operation/ c-section (caesarean section).



You can spend lots of time in the nursery with your baby.

If baby is unable to suck, the staff will help you 'express' (get some milk from your breasts using your hand or a pump). The milk is given to baby through a tube that goes into baby's tummy.

Going home from hospital

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Going home

If you are going home by car you will need to buy or hire a baby car seat to keep baby safe while travelling.



If you live in a community it is important to go to the health centre. The staff can meet your baby and check you are both well.



You or your family may want to do some traditional ceremonies for baby when you get home.

Your body after the birth

After having a baby it takes about 6 weeks for your body to return to normal.

Here are some things to expect:

- “Afterbirth pains” (cramps) which help the baby bag (uterus) to go back to normal size.
- Hard, lumpy breasts - your body soon gets to know how much milk baby needs and your breasts will soften.
- Constipation or haemorrhoids see page 31.
- Stinging when you wee.
- Hormone changes that make you tired and moody for a couple of days.
- Possible bleeding which slows down after 10 days.
- You will have to wait after you give birth to have sex. How long you wait is different for every woman. Ask your midwife, nurse or doctor how long to wait. Tell your partner “doctor says I can’t have sex yet”.



It can be scary and painful to do a poo after having a baby. It will be easier if you:

- avoid hard poo (constipation)
- find a good position, put your feet on a step (knees higher than hips)
- place your elbows on your knees and lean forward
- relax your tummy.

Keeping healthy after the birth

Talk to the health staff about how often to visit the health centre. At first this could be weekly or every 2 weeks - depending on how you and baby are going.

You can also visit the health centre any time you are worried about your baby or yourself.



Depression after your baby (postnatal depression)

This is different from the tiredness and sadness you may feel in the first few days after baby is born. Talk to the health staff if you:

- are very tired
- very sad
- want to cry or do cry a lot
- are not managing with your baby.

You can also call the NT Mental Health line 1800 682 288.



To stay healthy:

- stay away from alcohol, cigarettes and other drugs
- drink lots of water, eat good food.

Exercise after birth

Exercise is important. If you had a natural birth with no complications:

- ✓ You can start walking straight away.
- ✓ You can go back to swimming and bike riding 6 weeks after you give birth.

Some exercises put pressure on your pelvic floor. Talk to your nurse or health worker about what would be good for you.

STOP if you notice heaviness or pressure in your vagina.

DON'T go in a pool for 6 weeks to avoid infection if you have had a baby operation (cesarean section) or your vagina was torn during birth.

Do pelvic floor exercises every day - see page 18.



Your baby

What you can to expect from your newborn baby:

- Babies breastfeed day and night (8-12 times in 24 hours). The short times when babies are awake and not feeding are good times to play with your baby - talking, singing and cuddling.

- It is normal for newborn babies to cry. Feeding, cuddling and making sure your baby is comfortable is important.
- Babies need about 16 hours sleep from the beginning of day to the beginning of the next day. They usually sleep 1.5 hours each time.
- Skin rashes on the face or upper body are common for the first few weeks. Go to the health centre if these have pus or scabs or if the rash is under the nappy.
- Tummy time is good for baby. This means putting your baby on their tummy and playing with them.

My baby is crying a lot

Check:

- are they dirty, hot or cold?
- are there too many people around?
- are they hungry?
- have you been drinking alcohol or coffee or smoking?

Some different ways of holding an unhappy baby.





Keeping baby safe

Wash your hands:

- before breastfeeding
- after changing baby's nappy
- after going to the toilet.



Cigarette smoke can hurt to your baby.

If you have times that you drink or take drugs, let someone you trust look after your baby when you do this.



Safe sleeping

- Lie baby on his or her back down the end of the bed.
- No soft toys in the cot or near baby.
- Keep blankets away from baby's face.
- Always make sure baby cannot fall out of bed.

!
You or your partner should not sleep with baby if you have been drinking, smoking or taking other drugs.

For more information about safe sleeping contact: SIDS and KIDS helpline NT on (08) 8948 5311.

Health centre check-up (postnatal check)

When baby is 6-8 weeks old it is time for you to have a health check. This check is to make sure your body is returning to normal after pregnancy and birth. You may need to see a doctor for this check.

At this visit the health staff will check:

- Your baby bag (uterus) has shrunk to normal size.
- You do not have any infections.
- If you had a baby operation/c-section the wound is healed.
- If you had any stitches that these are healed.
- You are doing your pelvic floor exercises
- Whether you need to have a women's check.
- You know about contraception.
- How your breastfeeding is going.
- Your blood for syphilis and check urine.
- If you need any immunisations.

If you have diabetes when you were pregnant it is important that you have a diabetes check-up 6 weeks after your baby is born. At this check-up you can find out your own risk of diabetes now that you are not pregnant. You will need a check-up at least 3-6 months before you plan another pregnancy.



Health centre appointments for baby

In the first 2 years babies grow very quickly and are very excited to learn about the world around them.

It is important to take your baby to the health centre for needles (immunisations) and health checks.

The staff at the hospital or health centre will give you a baby health book.



Times to go to the health centre are when baby is:

- having their first visit
- 1 month old
- 2 months old
- 4 months old
- 6 months old
- 9 months old
- from 1 year old until 5 years old – every 6 months.

The health staff will weigh your baby and make sure baby is growing well and getting strong. They will talk about how to keep your baby safe, healthy and strong.

You can take a family member or friend with you to the health centre for your baby's appointments or baby needles (immunisations).

More information about looking after children: www.raisingchildren.net.au

Put the phone number for the health centre



Being a parent

Your baby is learning a lot from you. You can help your baby learn by giving them a safe place to be and lots of attention.

Baby's arrival will bring changes in life for you and your family. Some of these changes might be exciting and fun, some might be difficult.

To look after your child, take care of yourself.



Look for help from your partner, family, friends and community members when you feel stressed.

Talk to your family about what is important to you about being a parent. Talk about how you would like to 'bring up' your child.

Take time to get to know this new little person who has joined your family.

Spend time with people who help you and your baby.

Let someone you trust look after your baby sometimes so you can do things you enjoy alone, with your partner, family or friends.



How your partner can help

- shopping
- cooking
- washing
- bathing the baby
- changing nappies
- taking the baby for a walk so you can have a rest
- playing with the baby.

Most importantly enjoy your new baby and enjoy being a mother.

Having space between pregnancies allows your body to heal. If you want another baby ask at the health centre how long to wait and types of contraception.





Supporting a pregnant woman – dads, partners, families

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New babies are exciting, special and important for our families. Mum, dad, uncle, auntie, brother, sister, grandparents – all baby's carers are important to your baby. This information is for dads and people who will support a pregnant woman and care for a new baby. Supporting a woman through pregnancy will help the baby have the best start to life.



Did you know

It is the sperm that controls if your baby will be a boy or a girl.

Baby's genes

Half of baby (their genes) come from the father. If you are planning on having a baby, it is important for both parents to be healthy in body and mind. When the father is healthy, his sperm are stronger. Before you make a baby (conception), you can keep healthy by:

- doing exercise
- eating well
- getting an STI test
- not smoking
- not drinking too much alcohol
- being connected to family and community.

If the pregnancy is unplanned, the earlier you can make healthy choices the better for baby.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

STIs are common. Syphilis can seriously harm your baby but is easy to treat. It's important for both parents to be tested during the pregnancy to keep your baby safe. If you have an STI you need to practice safe sex with your partner until it has been treated.

Finding out you will be a parent

You may have many emotions waiting for the birth of your baby. You may feel:

- excited
- happy
- scared
- closer to your partner
- left out or unloved
- anxious
- stressed.

This is all normal. Talk about your feelings with your partner, your family and other men (your dad, other dads and uncles). Think about good role models.



Gambling can cause big money worries.

You can call 1800 858 858 any time if you are worried about gambling.

Things you may worry about:

- how to be a parent
- how to be a good role model
- where you will live
- getting the house ready for the baby
- money
- childcare
- work
- relationship with your partner
- relationship with other family members.

Centrelink can help with some of these. Talking with your partner, family, men's health workers or men's group can also help.

The Australian parenting website www.raisingchildren.net.au has pregnancy and parenting videos, stories and apps.



How to help

Your partner will need to go to the health centre for check-ups for her and baby's health. It's important to ask her if she would like you to come. Here you will:

- learn about changes to the mother's body as the baby grows and how you can make her comfortable
- learn how your baby is growing and developing
- listen to baby's heart
- see photos (ultrasound scans) of your baby.

Cooking healthy food

It is important for your baby's mum to eat healthy food while she is pregnant so the baby grows well.

Being pregnant can make women more tired and feel sick. The smell of cooking can make her feel worse. Help her by doing more shopping and cooking.

Go to the store for healthy foods for your partner. If you're not sure ask the child nurse, health worker or store person to help you. Ask for guides on how to prepare and cook these healthy meals.

Housework can be good exercise
– try it with your favourite music.

Do more exercise

Active parents are more likely to have active and healthy kids. Pregnancy can be a great time for fathers to do more exercise. Exercise:

- helps relieve stress
- sets good habits for when the baby arrives
- can support your partner to exercise more too.

Try and be active everyday. If you are currently not doing any exercise, any physical activity is better than doing none at all.

Don't smoke

If you smoke around your baby's mum the smoke will get to your baby. This smoke can make your baby sick. Try quitting smoking or smoking less. If you smoke make sure it is far away from anyone who is pregnant. If your partner smokes – try quitting together for your baby.

Drink less alcohol

Alcohol can go through mum to baby. Alcohol can cause serious health problems for your baby. If you drink alcohol, try drinking less or stop while your partner is pregnant. This will help your partner not drink alcohol while pregnant and when breastfeeding.

Get up to date with needles

There are two vaccines to get before your baby is born:

- Influenza vaccine
- Whooping cough (pertussis) vaccine.

These sicknesses can be very serious if a baby gets them. If you have the vaccine this will help stop the baby catching these diseases, which can cause death.

Keep your home calm

Violence has no place around pregnant women, babies or children. It can cause harm to developing babies and children which can last forever. If you argue and feel angry with your partner or other family members talk to a health worker or counsellor.

Before the birth

If you live in a remote community your partner will go to Darwin or Alice Springs 2-4 weeks before the baby is due. This is the safest thing for her and your baby. Big hospitals have the professional care and equipment needed if there is a problem.

How you can help:

- Look after other children while she is away. If you can't look after the children alone, find someone to help you look after them.
- If you go with her to hospital talk about what she wants and how you can help at the birth.
- Help her pack a bag for the hospital.

If you will be at the birth, how will you get there?

If it is your partner's first pregnancy and she would like you to be at the birth you can ask to be her "escort". This means the health centre can help you and your partner travel to town. In town you can stay with family or in a hostel. If your partner already has children, the health centre will arrange travel for her but you will need to arrange your own travel, for you and the children.

If you are working or studying decide how much time you will take off work during and after the birth. Discuss leave with your employer or teachers.

Centrelink can give you "dad and partner pay" for 2 weeks while you are on unpaid leave from work to care for your new child.



The birth (labour)

You can support your partner's labour by asking what she needs. Some parts of the birth will be difficult for your partner and having someone there she trusts helps her feel strong and safe.

How you can help:

- rub her back, feet and neck
- tell her she will be ok
- help her breath well
- keep children and other people away
- bring her ice or drinks, organise food if she wants some
- help her move around if she wants
- put the shower on and help her with clothing and towels
- play some nice music
- tell her nice stories.

Parenting together (as a family)

Life will change when you have a baby.

If you spend time with your baby, they will grow and learn better and be stronger when they grow up.

Your baby will be happier and healthier if they understand their family and community. The more time you spend with your baby, the more you can share your family's story with them.

Connecting well with your baby from when they are born, will create a strong bond and help them feel safe now and as they grow up.

You will need to think about what your baby needs from you and your family. You cannot breastfeed your baby but there are lots of other ways you can help so your partner can rest.

How you can help

- shopping
- cooking
- cleaning the house
- have a clean room for mum, you and baby only
- washing clothes and bedding
- bathing the baby
- changing nappies
- taking the baby for a walk
- feeding the baby
- playing with the baby
- take turns checking on the baby in the middle of the night.



Safe sleeping

- lie baby on his or her back down the end of the cot
- no animals in the bed or near baby
- no soft toys in the bed or near baby
- keep blankets away from baby's face
- always make sure baby cannot fall out of bed.

Think about a new routine with your partner

Getting to know your baby

Looking into your baby's eyes, smiling and talking will help them feel relaxed and safe. Playing with them, making funny noises and silly faces helps them learn to communicate.

The more time you spend with your baby, the more you will get to know them and how to take care of them.

My baby is crying a lot

What can I do? Check for other problems. Are they hot or cold? Are there too many people around? Are they hungry? Has baby done a wee or poo?

Some different ways of holding an unhappy baby:



Feeling worried or upset?

All parents are unsure about how to care for their baby at first. Being a parent is a hard and very important job. Talk about how you are feeling with someone you trust. It does not matter how you and your partner share the jobs of caring for your baby, as long as you are both happy with your role.

Some dads and partners may feel left out or anxious about everything that your baby needs.

If you are having lots of worries and feel really unhappy (depressed) go to your local health centre and ask for help. You can also call Beyond Blue Support Service at any time.



Beyond Blue

Call 1300 224 636

24 hours / 7 days a week

It is important for you, your partner and your baby's health and wellness that you do not have lots of worries or feel really unhappy (depressed).

How is your partner feeling?

If you notice that your partner is crying for no reason, annoyed a lot more than usual, very stressed or can't sleep then she may have postnatal depression. This happens often and she will need your support.

It is important that your partner goes to the local health centre if she is feeling this way.



Breastfeeding

Breast milk (mother's milk) is the best food for your baby.

How you can help

Help around the house with cooking, cleaning and shopping so your partner has time to breastfeed.

Breastfeeding is tiring so take the baby for a walk or play with the baby so mum can have a rest.

Breastfeeding can be hard work so tell your partner when they are doing a great job by giving your baby the best start in life.

The Breastfeeding Helpline is always available and you can ask for an interpreter: 1800 686 268

Your relationship with baby's mum

A new baby can change your relationship with your partner. A new baby means new responsibility and this can be stressful. Talking with your partner about your feelings helps.

You can also get support from fathers groups or go to marriage counselling with your partner if you are finding your relationship very difficult.

When can we have sex again?

Be patient. Pregnancy and childbirth can cause trauma to a woman's body. Some women will have to wait weeks or months before they are ready to have sex again. Your partner may also feel different, tired or uncomfortable and want to wait to have sex.

Health centre appointments for baby

It is important to take your baby to the health centre for immunisations and health checks.

Depending on where you live, in town or in community, the times that you go to the health centre will be different. Check with your health centre how often you should go for baby checks.

The staff at the hospital or health centre will give you a Baby Health Book.

Times to go to the health centre are when baby is:

- having their first visit
- 1 month old
- 2 months old
- 4 months old
- 6 months old
- 9 months old
- from 1 year old until 5 years old – every 6 months.

The health staff will weigh your baby and make sure she or he is growing well and getting strong. They will talk about how to keep your baby safe, healthy, happy and strong.

Appointments

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Date: Time: Place:

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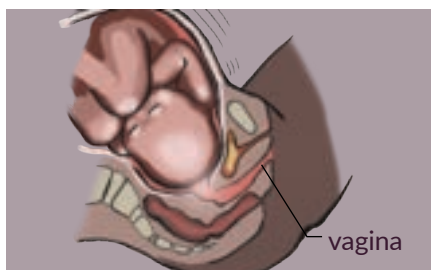
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Words to know (Glossary)



Parts of your body

- **Birth canal:** the vagina.
- **Uterus:** the womb or baby bag.
- **Fundus:** this is the top of your baby bag.
- **Cervix:** the 'neck' or opening at the bottom of the baby bag or uterus.
- **Placenta:** the afterbirth - the sack that is attached to the baby bag through which you supply your baby with all the nourishment he or she needs to grow strong and healthy.
- **Vagina:** your baby leaves your body through your vagina.



Giving birth (labour) words

- **Labour:** the time from when your contractions are regular to when baby and the afterbirth is born.
- **Caesarean Section (C-Section):** an operation to get your baby out of your body if your baby cannot be born through your vagina.
- **Contractions:** baby pains - when your tummy tightens or squeezes to push your baby out.
- **Dilated:** how big is the opening for the baby to come out.
- **Epidural:** If you choose, your doctor can give you a needle in the back so that you don't feel the contractions.
- **Episiotomy:** a small cut sometimes made to the vaginal opening to make it bigger for baby to come out.
- **Forceps/ventouse:** tools sometimes used by the doctor to help baby come out.
- **Gas:** one type of pain relief you can have when you are in labour. You breathe the gas in through a tube.
- **Induction:** the doctors give you some medication to make the contractions start.
- **Rupture of membranes:** when the bag of water inside you breaks.
- **Syntocinon:** A medicine to tell your body to get rid of the placenta.
- **Trimesters:** the 3 different stages of your pregnancy.
- **Waters:** the fluid inside the baby bag that the baby floats around in.

Words about birth troubles

There are some things that can go wrong at birth. The midwives and doctors will help you to birth your baby safely.

Shoulder dystocia: Baby's head has come out but the shoulders are stuck against your pubic bone. The midwives will help to get you into a good position to free the shoulder.

Fetal distress: Baby can get very tired and have a very slow or very fast heart rate.

Failure to progress: Your labour is very slow or stops if your contractions are not strong enough, the cervix doesn't open properly, or your baby is too big or not in the right position.

Cord prolapse: If the cord comes out before the baby.

Manual removal of placenta: You need an operation to get the placenta or afterbirth out.

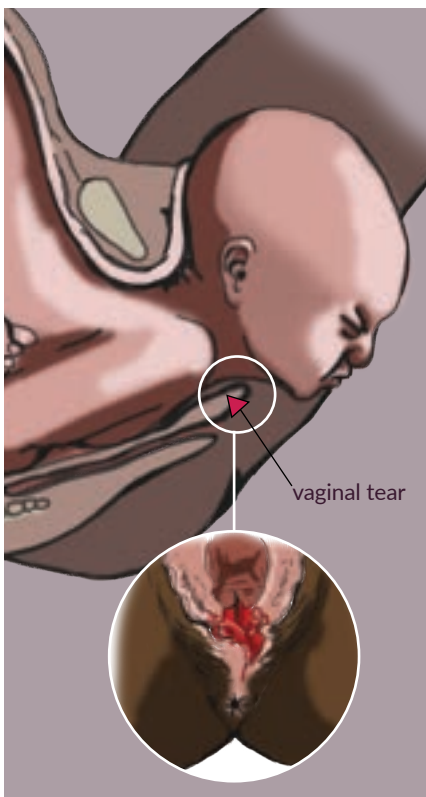
Perinatal depression: Depression that happens in the first year after having a baby.

Post-partum haemorrhage: If you have too much bleeding after your baby is born.

Wound infection: You can get an infection from the cut where your baby came out of.

Vaginal tears

Sometimes the area between the vagina and the anus (the perineum) will tear as the baby's head comes out.



Breastfeeding words

Expressing: Getting breast milk outside your body through a pump or using your hand. You can give this to your baby later.

Artificial feeding: Using infant formula to feed your baby.

Department of Health

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