

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

SCOPE**1 Guideline title**

Antenatal care for the normal healthy woman

1.1 Short title

Antenatal care

2 Background

- (a) The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has commissioned the National Collaborating Centre for Women's and Children's Health to develop a clinical guideline on antenatal care for use in the NHS in England and Wales; this will update the existing NICE guideline 'Antenatal care: routine care for the healthy pregnant woman' (published in October 2003). The guideline update will provide recommendations for good practice that are based on the best available evidence of clinical and cost effectiveness.
- (b) The Institute's clinical guidelines will support the implementation of National Service Frameworks (NSFs) in those aspects of care where a Framework has been published. The statements in each NSF reflect the evidence that was used at the time the Framework was prepared. The clinical guidelines and technology appraisals published by the Institute after an NSF has been issued will have the effect of updating the Framework.
- (c) NICE clinical guidelines support the role of healthcare professionals in providing care in partnership with patients, taking account of their individual needs and preferences, and ensuring that patients (and their carers and families, where appropriate) can make informed decisions about their care and treatment.

3 Need for guideline update

- a) Since the publication of the original guideline on antenatal care a number of important pieces of evidence have become available, particularly concerning the topics of gestational diabetes and the use of ultrasound. These developments have led to the need to review the current advice, so the update of the guideline is being initiated earlier than originally planned.
- b) The antenatal period offers a critical opportunity for healthcare professionals to:
 - listen to the woman's concerns
 - identify risk issues, including social, obstetric and medical factors
 - offer choices for screening
 - discuss the packages of care that form the antenatal care pathway
 - inform the woman of the support and help available to her during the course of her pregnancy.

The guideline

- a) The guideline development process is described in detail in two publications that are available from the NICE website (see 'Further information'). 'The guideline development process: an overview for stakeholders, the public and the NHS' describes how organisations can become involved in the development of a guideline. 'The guidelines manual' provides advice on the technical aspects of guideline development.
- b) This document is the scope. It defines exactly what this guideline will (and will not) examine, and what the guideline developers will consider.
- c) The areas that will be addressed by the guideline are described in the following sections.

3.1 Population

3.1.1 Groups that will be covered

- a) Normal healthy women during the antenatal period.

3.1.2 Groups that will not be covered

- a) Women who have medical or obstetric complications during the antenatal period.

3.2 Healthcare setting

- a) Primary, community and hospital-based care.

3.3 Clinical management

- a) How to identify women who require additional or shared care (see appendix).
- b) What information should be given during the antenatal period to inform women's decisions about care during pregnancy, labour, birth and the postnatal period.
- c) Lifestyle
 - What is the role of vitamin D supplementation and what dietary advice should be specifically given about this?
 - Is there a safe level of alcohol intake during the antenatal period?
- d) Screening for abnormalities
 - When should ultrasound procedures be used to determine gestational age and fetal abnormalities?
 - What is the role of screening for haemoglobinopathy and what is the appropriate timing of this investigation?

- What are the criteria for symphysial-fundal height measurements in determining normal fetal growth, so ensuring accuracy and cost-effectiveness? What is the role of individualised growth charts?

e) Screening for clinical conditions

- Does screening for gestational diabetes improve outcome for women and babies? What is an appropriate clinical and cost effectiveness model for screening for gestational diabetes?
- What is an appropriate clinical and cost effectiveness model for screening for pre-eclampsia and preterm labour?

3.4 Status

3.4.1 Scope

This is the draft scope.

The guideline will cross refer to the following NICE guidance.

- Antenatal and postnatal mental health: clinical management and service guidance. NICE clinical guideline (anticipated publication January 2007). Specifically the section on measures to assess the risk of mental health issues in the antenatal period.
- Maternal and child nutrition: guidance for midwives, health visitors, pharmacists and other primary care services to improve the nutrition of pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and children in low income households. NICE public health programme guidance (anticipated publication date May 2007).
- Diabetes in pregnancy. NICE clinical guideline (anticipated publication November 2007). Specifically the section of the diabetes guideline that relates to the clinical and cost effectiveness of interventions for gestational diabetes. This will be used to inform the guidance on identification of women with gestational diabetes in the antenatal care guideline. These two guidelines will be developed and published in parallel.

- The clinical effectiveness and cost effectiveness of routine anti-D prophylaxis for rhesus negative women in pregnancy. *NICE technology appraisal* no. 41 (2002). Available from www.nice.org.uk/TA041. This technology appraisal may be reviewed during the development of the antenatal care guideline. Any update will be taken into account during the guideline development.

3.4.2 Guideline

The development of the guideline recommendations will begin in September 2006.

4 Further information

Information on the guideline development process is provided in:

- 'The guideline development process: an overview for stakeholders, the public and the NHS' (2006 edition)
- 'The guidelines manual' (2006 edition).

These booklets are available as PDF files from the NICE website (www.nice.org.uk/guidelinesprocess). Information on the progress of the guideline will also be available from the website.

Appendix: Identification of women who need additional or shared care

Clinical need

As part of providing routine care for all normal healthy women, healthcare professionals should identify women who need additional or shared care. Although a number of individual assessment tools have been tried in the past, they have been of limited success.

An assessment tool, giving guidance on how to identify these women, will be developed alongside the updated antenatal care guideline. This tool will allow the correct care pathway to be offered to all women and will ensure that the antenatal care guideline is not used inappropriately for those with additional needs.

The needs assessment tool

The assessment tool will take the form of a questionnaire (or set of questionnaires) that healthcare professionals can use to assess the needs and risks of women during the antenatal period.

The tool will be developed using the methods described in the guidelines manual (see section 4 above). Development will be overseen by the National Collaborating Centre for Women's and Children's Health, within the established governance routes for NICE guidance.

We anticipate that there will be little evidence about how to identify women who need additional care, so a meeting will be held to review and interpret what evidence there is, and form a consensus about the content of the tool. This national consensus approach is likely to be more effective in developing a tool that will be widely implemented.