

Antenatal care

Information for the public

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Care for women during pregnancy

Antenatal care means the routine care and check-ups that women get during their pregnancy. All women should be offered good antenatal care that is sensitive to their needs, spots any problems early and helps them and their partners or families to feel confident and prepared for the birth of their baby.

We want this guideline to make a difference to women and their partners and families by making sure that:

- antenatal care is more easily available to women through different routes, including self-referral online or using the NHS app
- women have the information they need to make their own choices, for example, in how to manage common pregnancy problems like nausea and sickness
- partners can be more involved in women's antenatal care
- antenatal classes are more widely accessible to all women.

Making decisions together

Decisions about care are best when they are made together. Your healthcare professionals should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns. They should also:

- explain what antenatal checks you will be offered and when – and give you your schedule of your appointments
- provide information and support that helps you prepare for the birth and caring for your baby
- make sure you know who to contact if you have questions or worries.

If the information you are given does not explain things clearly to you, ask your healthcare professional for more support.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Where can I find out more?

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Action on Pre-eclampsia](#), 01386 761 848
- [Down's Syndrome Association](#), 0333 1212 300
- [National Childbirth Trust \(NCT\)](#), 0300 330 0700
- [Sickle Cell Society](#), 020 8961 7795
- [UK Thalassaemia Society](#), 020 8882 0011

The [NHS website](#), the NHS pregnancy smoking helpline (0800 169 9 169) and [Healthy Start](#) may also be good starting points for finding out more.

Tommy's, King's College London and BabyCentre have a campaign called [Always Ask](#), to empower pregnant women to overcome fears about speaking to healthcare professionals about health concerns.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

We wrote this guideline with women and their families, and staff who provide care for them during pregnancy. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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