

Pregnancy & Being Pregnant



Introduction

Pregnancy can be a big life change. It can bring up a mix of emotions, from shock or confusion to fear or even excitement. For young people, pregnancy can be a different experience than it is for adults. There might be extra challenges when it comes to school, relationships, mental health, or getting the support you need.

If you think you or your partner might be pregnant or have had a positive test, you might be asking yourself, “What now?” Whatever your situation, it’s important to know what your options are and that there are people and services that can support you during this time, you don’t have to go through it alone



What to do if you think you're pregnant

Signs of pregnancy

Firstly, look out for signs of pregnancy. One of the first signs of pregnancy is a missed period. Other symptoms of early pregnancy may include:

- a shorter or lighter period
- mood changes
- feeling more tired than usual
- feeling sick or vomiting
- stomach cramps
- tender breasts
- more frequent urination

Everybody is different and you may only experience some of these symptoms

or none at all.

You're not alone.

If the reason you are worried about pregnancy is because you have been sexually assaulted, there are free, private and confidential supports to help. See below for support details

- [NSW Health Sexual Assault Services](#) provide 24/7 responses to people who have experienced sexual assault, including crisis responses, counselling and a specialised medical service to assess your health and wellbeing. These services can also collect evidence for legal purposes if you would like them to.
- [Full Stop Australia](#) 24/7 counselling and support on 1800 424 017. They are free and offer support over the phone, online or face to face.
- [1800Respect](#) (1800 737 732) provides confidential sexual assault and family and domestic violence counselling via phone and webchat. It is important to seek medical assistance (such as through NSW Health Sexual Assault Services) as soon as possible.

A medical response can respond to your health needs, including treating any injury or pain you may be feeling, sexual health screening and emergency contraception (including what is also known as the 'morning after' pill).

You can learn more about emergency contraception in our [Sexual Health](#) section.



Step 1 - Take a pregnancy test:

It's your decision about what to do if you think you're pregnant. The first step is to get a pregnancy test to confirm you are pregnant. [Pregnancy, Birth & Baby](#) has more information on signs of pregnancy, what to do next and what to think about while you're making your decision.

There are 2 options for pregnancy tests. You can use a home pregnancy test or go to your local doctor and ask for a pregnancy test. Keep in mind, if you use a home pregnancy test and it comes back positive, you should visit your doctor as soon as possible to get another test to confirm the result and access health care. It's important to get a test as soon as you can, so you can receive the support you need moving forward.

Tip - try to buy a pregnancy test that has two tests in the package so you can repeat the test after a day or two to be extra sure of the result. It's also more cost effective.

Where to get pregnancy tests

Testing at home: Home pregnancy tests are available from your local supermarket (self-serve checkouts are great if you are worried about privacy) or from your local chemist. If you're a bit nervous, ask a friend to go with you.

Read the instructions carefully and follow the directions. Pregnancy tests work by testing the hormone levels in your body that change when you are pregnant. For them to detect these hormones, you need to take the test about **14 days after** you think you may have fallen pregnant (the information in the test will tell you - the main thing is not to take it too early, or it might not show up positive yet if you are pregnant). This important information will be on the packaging of the test.

If you have financial concerns around purchasing a pregnancy test, there might be free options in your area. Services such as Family Planning Australia provide free pregnancy tests.

You can find [Family Planning Australia Clinics](#) through their website.

Pregnancy test at the doctors: If a home pregnancy test comes back positive, you will need to see a doctor. You can book an appointment or go to a drop-in medical centre and ask for a pregnancy test. This can be a blood test or a urine test. If you're unsure about speaking to a doctor, see [visiting the doctor](#) and [your rights at the doctor](#).

Step 2 - Seek support:

If you are pregnant, it is normal to feel a mix of emotions. You might be excited, scared, happy, sad, or all of these at once. **Your mental health is just as important as your physical health**, and there's support out there so you don't have to go through it alone. It is important to seek support during this time to help with the next steps and to know your options. You can get support online, over the phone, or contact a sexual health clinic or youth service for support and information.

There are services and information available to support you:

- [Family Planning NSW Talkline](#) 1300 658 886: free and confidential

counselling and advice for pregnancy options. You can also ask them to help you find your local youth health centre.

Appointments are private and your information won't be shared without your permission.

Family Planning services are low-cost, and in some cases, free depending on your situation.

- [NSW Pregnancy Choices Helpline 1800 008 463](#). If you or someone you know is experiencing an unplanned pregnancy, the Pregnancy Choices Helpline can support with free, unbiased and confidential information on pregnancy options available in NSW
- [Kids Helpline](#) 1800 551 800: free and confidential counselling for people aged 5 to 25 years.
- **Brave Foundation**: great information on what steps to take and what to consider if you find out you are pregnant.
- [Services for Aboriginal Families: Aboriginal Maternal Infant Health Service \(AMIHS\)](#) provide culturally safe pregnancy care and support for you from the moment you find out you're pregnant, or even before conception. Alternatively, you can contact your local [Aboriginal Medical Service](#).
- [PANDA: 1300 726 306](#) PANDA is a national organisation that supports the mental health and wellbeing of expecting, new and growing families. Find information, resources, stories and helpline for perinatal anxiety and depression.
- [Lifeline 13 11 14](#) Providing all Australians experiencing emotional distress with 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.
- [Beyond Blue](#) 1300 224 636 Beyond Blue Support Service is available 24/7 for brief counselling. Call a counsellor or chat to a counsellor online.
- [Family Planning Australia Clinics](#) Family Planning Australia clinics offers confidential, non-judgmental help with your sexual and reproductive health. In addition to free pregnancy test, they support people of all genders and all ages, whether you're just starting to learn about your body or already have questions or concerns.



If I'm pregnant, what are the options?

Choosing what to do next may be a hard decision, or it may be easy. You may have been trying to have a baby or it could be unplanned and be a shock. [Family Planning Australia](#) have a pregnancy options booklet with information about support, helping to decide what to do and what options are available to you.

Talk to someone you trust, whether it's a partner, family member, friend, youth worker or another adult in your life. It's good to talk to someone about how you're feeling. Think about your current situation, your goals and dreams for the future, and how your decision may impact these goals. The decision is yours to make and you have several options.

It's important to speak with a health professional (a doctor or a sexual health nurse) who can explain your options and how they might impact you. You can access private and confidential support by talking to a nurse online at [the NSW Pregnancy Choices Helpline website](#) or speak to them on [1800 008 463](tel:1800008463) between **8.30am - 5.00pm** Monday to Friday.

Do I need to tell my parents?

That is up to you. There is no law that says you need to tell your parents if you are pregnant, or about what choices you make. You might be worried about your parent's reaction, but they could be a vital source of support.

Depending on your age and circumstances, they might need to find out eventually. If you're under 14, your parents usually need to give consent for medical procedures like abortion. If you want to know more information on what a doctor can and can't talk to your parents about, have a look at the [your rights at the doctor](#) page.

If you're not comfortable telling your parents, it's important to find a source of support to help you. You could speak to someone you trust like another member of your family, a teacher, your doctor, a youth worker or a sexual health worker who can talk through your options. Find out more at [Youth Law Australia](#).

Moving forward with the pregnancy

There are resources and tips to support you through pregnancy and when the baby is born.

You will need to link in with appropriate health care support. These appointments are called antenatal or pregnancy care appointments. They happen regularly throughout pregnancy to ensure you and baby are doing well. Your local doctor or [Healthdirect](#) can give more information about these appointments.

Your doctor should be able to help guide you on who to connect with.

Alcohol, drugs, prescribed medications and pregnancy

When you are pregnant, what you take, your baby takes too. Some substances can have serious effects on how your baby's brain develops and how they grow.

If you drink alcohol, it is important to know that no amount of alcohol is 'safe' during pregnancy and the safest thing for your baby is that you don't drink at all.

If you use drugs, talk to a health professional for advice. If you have been using drugs regularly, sometimes stopping suddenly can be dangerous for your baby. The health professional will be able to support you to reduce or stop taking the drug safely.

Smoking or vaping tobacco is also harmful to your baby's health during pregnancy. If you find it hard to reduce or stop smoking, you can get support from QuitLine on 13 78 48 or talk to a health professional who may be able to give you medication to help.

If you are prescribed medication, make sure to let the doctor or medical team know that you are pregnant.

For more information and support

- [Health services for young people](#)
- [Pregnancy, drugs & alcohol | The Royal Women's Hospital](#)
- [Alcohol and Drug Information Service NSW](#) (a confidential, anonymous information, advice and referral service) 02 8382 1000 (Sydney) or 1800 250 015 (rural, regional NSW)
- [Your Room](#)
- [Quit smoking](#)

Safety during pregnancy

Domestic and family violence includes any behaviour in an intimate, family or domestic relationship that is violent, threatening, coercive or controlling, or causes fear for your safety or wellbeing.

Women and girls are at greater risk of experiencing domestic violence from their partner during pregnancy. You may experience this abuse for the first time, or it may get worse while you are pregnant.

If you are experiencing domestic violence, you are not alone, and it is not your fault. Domestic and family violence is never okay, and the person being violent is the only one responsible for the violence.

You have a right to be safe and supported, and there is help available. You can

seek free and confidential support 24/7 from:

- [NSW Domestic Violence Line](#): 1800 65 64 63
 - [1800RESPECT](#): 1800 737 732
 - [Kids Helpline](#): 1800 55 1800.
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Resources for partners

If you're going to be a new parent and you are the partner of the person having the baby, this time can also be scary and exciting. [Raising Children Network](#) has some resources to help you along your journey, and how you can support the mother of the child. There is also text support for expectant dads through [SMS4dads](#).

Abortion or termination of pregnancy

An abortion sometimes called a termination of pregnancy is a safe procedure that

ends a pregnancy. Your right to have an abortion is the same as your right to have any other medical treatment. There are 2 ways abortion can be performed. One involves taking medication (medical abortion) and one involves a surgical procedure (surgical abortion) Find out more at [Family Planning Australia](#).

If you want to end a pregnancy you will need to find a doctor or medical service that performs abortions near you. In NSW, some midwives and nurse practitioners can also perform medical abortions before 9 weeks gestation.

In NSW, the [Search Plus website](#) operated by the NSW Pregnancy Choices Helpline can assist you find a service provider.

If you are under 18 years, the doctor or health professional will support you to make an informed decision, and support you to understand the treatment and what is involved. For more information see Pregnancy Choices [Youth Law Australia's Pregnancy page](#).

There is no requirement for the father to consent or be aware of the procedure, as parenting rights only exist once the child is born. If you are under 14 years, your parents or guardians usually need to give consent for abortion. If you need help or would like support in discussing your options (no matter what age you are) you can start by contacting a sexual health service or a youth health service. You can also phone the [NSW Family Planning Talkline](#) on **1300 658 886**, or [NSW Pregnancy Choices Helpline](#) on **1800 008 463** get non-judgmental and trustworthy information on your options.

If you choose to have an abortion, make sure you stay connected with someone to talk through it afterwards.
