



The Water Well Project

Pregnancy and Postnatal Wellbeing. Version 6. Updated 10/01/2024 by ZB, TD

Pregnancy and Postnatal Wellbeing

This topic is best to have as a discussion with Q&A. Please focus on the specific areas of interest of the participants in your session. It is very important to be aware of and sensitive to different cultural practices regarding pregnancy, birth and postnatal care. Please listen well and approach these conversations sensitively.

Background information for facilitators ^{1 2}

Some women will approach pregnancy and birth with fear and difficulty, while others will find it enjoyable. There can be enormous physical, mental and social challenges associated with pregnancy and having a baby, and we all have different needs for support and information.

- In Australia there were 300,684 births in 2022
- 38% of births are by caesarean
- Gestational diabetes occurs in 1 in 6 pregnancies

Conversation starters

- Would anyone like to share a story about their pregnancy and/or the birth of their child? E.g., what model of care did you choose? What worked well and what didn't?
- What do you wish you had known before your pregnancy?
- If you haven't been pregnant before, is there anything you are worried about

Staying healthy while you are pregnant

- Staying physically active during pregnancy
- Pelvic floor muscle exercises
- Looking after your back
- Healthy eating
 - Taking pregnancy multivitamins
 - Foods to avoid e.g., listeria, caffeine, alcohol
- Looking after your weight
- Avoid smoking, including shisha
- Looking after your mental health and wellbeing

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2023 <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/births-australia/latest-release>

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2023 <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/mothers-babies/national-core-maternity-indicators/contents/labour-birth/b5https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/diabetes/diabetes/contents/how-common-is-diabetes/gestational-diabetes>



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- Risks of family violence³

PANDA National Helpline (Monday to Saturday) 1300 726 306 or <https://panda.org.au/>

Morning sickness⁴ and other common problems⁵

- Nausea and vomiting, and how to address
- Constipation and how to address

Talk to your doctor or midwives about symptoms of pregnancy that worry you.

Routine tests and screening^{6 7}

It is common to have ultrasounds and blood tests throughout the pregnancy. These may be at different times depending on your individual pregnancy.

- Ultrasounds – purpose, usual schedule, costs
- Blood tests – usual schedule, what they are looking for, possible outcomes and solution
- Genetic tests – choices available, why you may make that choice, costs, timeframes, who you can talk to about tests
- Group B Strep swab

Safe use of medicines

While many medicines are safe to take during pregnancy and breastfeeding, some medicines can harm or affect the growth and development of your baby. Always check with your healthcare professional about any medicines you take or are planning to take.

- Keep a list – medicines you take including traditional or herbal, discuss with doctor or midwife
- Pregnancy multivitamins
- Potential dangers of herbal medicines – how to check
- Follow instructions
- Talk to a pharmacist or doctor
- Store medicines safely
- Safe disposal of medicines

³ Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care

<https://www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/family-violence-during-pregnancy>

⁴ The Royal Women's Hospital Guidelines

https://thewomens.r.worldssl.net/images/uploads/downloadable-records/clinical-guidelines/nausea-and-vomiting-pregnancy_280720.pdf

⁵ The Royal Women's Hospital Guidelines <https://www.thewomens.org.au/health-information/pregnancy-and-birth/a-healthy-pregnancy/common-concerns-in-early-pregnancy>

⁶ RANZOG <https://ranzocg.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Antenatal-Care-during-Pregnancy.pdf>

⁷ Better Health Channel <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/servicesandsupport/tests-scans-and-checks-pregnancy-and-labour>



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'Use Medicines Safely' handout

Ongoing pregnancy care

- Usual schedule of appointments
- Examinations and investigations – wellbeing, blood pressure, urine, position and size of baby, heartbeat, blood and urine tests
- Screening for gestational diabetes
- Baby movements, maternal sleep position in 3rd trimester

Pregnancy models of care options ⁸

Public hospital options:

- Midwife care
- Shared care (½ the pregnancy care with a GP or midwife in the community and ½ with the hospital maternity team)
- Collaborative care – you may have your care shared between doctors and midwives in the maternity clinic if you have some health complications or a complex maternity history
- Speciality care (women with 'tertiary needs', very complex needing multidisciplinary care, available at MMC Clayton)
- Midwife group practice or caseload midwifery

Private obstetrician

Pregnancy complications

Early pregnancy issues

- Miscarriage
- Bleeding
- Unwanted pregnancy

Later in pregnancy

- Placenta problems
- Baby position
- Baby growth
- High blood pressure and preeclampsia
- Gestational diabetes
- Short cervix

Tell your doctor or midwife if you have⁹

- Vaginal bleeding
- Waters have broken

⁸ Royal Women's Hospital <https://www.thewomens.org.au/health-information/pregnancy-and-birth/now-you-are-pregnant/pregnancy-care-birthing-options/>

⁹ RANZCOG <https://ranzcof.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Antenatal-Care-during-Pregnancy.pdf>



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- If your baby is not moving as much as usual
- Severe constant pain
- Severe headache or blurred vision
- Abdominal trauma e.g., fall, car accident, blow to abdomen

Labour and birth^{10 11}

*Labour and Birth video

English: <https://rahma.health/en/pregnancy-care/videos>

Arabic: <https://rahma.health/ar/pregnancy-care/videos>

Dari: <https://rahma.health/en/labour-and-birth>

- Birth plan – type of labour and birth, pain relief options
- Recognising you are in labour
 - What to do
 - When to call the hospital
- Types of births – spontaneous vaginal or caesarean
- Interventions – induction of labour, assisted vaginal birth with (vacuum) ventouse, or forceps, emergency caesarean
- Perineal tears and episiotomy (prevention, management)

After your baby is born

*Postnatal Care video

English: <https://rahma.health/en/pregnancy-care/videos>

Arabic: <https://rahma.health/ar/pregnancy-care/videos>

Dari: <https://rahma.health/en/postnatal-care>

After birth¹²

- What to expect – spontaneous vaginal, instrumental (assisted) or caesarean section
- Length of stay in hospital
- Home visits - hospital Extended Postnatal Care (EPC) Maternal Child Health Nurse

What to expect after birth

- Breasts – colostrum, milk, potential complications e.g. mastitis, thrush, low milk supply, poor attachment
- Vaginal discharge
- Belly – after pains, abdominal muscle separation
- Bowel – Haemorrhoids, bowel health, using bowels
- Urine – Incontinence, pelvic floor exercises
- Exercise
- Sex

¹⁰ RANZCOG <https://rancog.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Labour-and-birth-pamphlet.pdf>

¹¹ Shifra <https://shifra.app/en/pregnancy-and-postnatal-care/pregnancy>

¹² Raising Children Network <https://raisingchildren.net.au/pregnancy/labour-birth>



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- Contraception
- Breastfeeding**
 - Benefits for mum and baby
 - Regular feeding
 - Drinking enough water
 - Challenges – Australian Breastfeeding Association, lactation consultant, midwives
- Postnatal anxiety and depression¹³**
 - Difference between 'baby blues' and PND
 - Symptoms to look for
 - When and re to seek help
- Take care of yourself**
 - Be kind to yourself
 - Talk to others
 - Ask for and accept offers of help
 - Regular exercise
 - Eat a healthy diet and drink enough water
 - Sleep
- Supporting your partner¹⁴**
 - Watch for signs of postnatal depression/anxiety
 - Emotional support
 - Practical support
- Where to find help**
 - Your GP
 - Your partner, family and friends
 - Local community health centres
 - Mothers' group
 - During your pregnancy, go to the hospital if you are experiencing:
 - Bleeding
 - Reduced baby movements
 - Severe pain
 - Maternal and Child Health Line 13 22 29 (VIC), 1800 882 436 (NSW), 1300 808 178 (Tas)
 - PANDA (Post and Antenatal Depression Association) helpline 1300 726 306 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 7:30 pm AEST)
 - Pregnancy, birth, baby website – initiative through Department of Health – fact sheets and can phone or video call a maternal child health nurse
 - Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) National Register (Family and Relationship Therapy) (03) 9486 3077
 - Australian Breastfeeding Association 1800 686 268

¹³ PANDA (Post and Antenatal Depression Association) <https://panda.org.au/>

¹⁴ Raising Children Network <https://raisingchildren.net.au/grown-ups/looking-after-yourself/anxiety-depression-before-after-birth/pnd-your-partner>



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- Call **Telephone Interpreter Service FIRST** on 13 14 50 and tell them you wish to call one of these hotlines

Monash Health Women's

<https://monashwomens.org/health-information/other-languages/>

More information

The Royal Women's Hospital

Translated fact sheets on prenatal health checks (search "Early pregnancy – how to take care of yourself) here:

<https://www.thewomens.org.au/health-information/fact-sheets/>

Recommendations during Pregnancy

<https://www.thewomens.org.au/health-information/pregnancy-and-birth/a-healthy-pregnancy/quick-tips/>

Translated Information

<https://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/resources/about-pregnancy-video>

Australian Breastfeeding Association

<https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>

Translated Information

<https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/bf-info/other-languages>

PANDA (Post and Antenatal Depression Association)

Translated factsheet: Anxiety and Depression in Pregnancy & early parenthood

<https://www.panda.org.au/awareness/resources>

Raising Children Network

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/grown-ups/looking-after-yourself/anxiety-depression-before-after-birth>

Mental Health

Beyond Blue

Translated Information

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/multicultural-people/translated-mental-health-resources>

During pregnancy and for new parents

<https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au/pregnancy-and-new-parents>



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Embrace Multicultural Mental Health Translated Fact Sheets

<https://www.embracementalhealth.org.au/community/multilingual-information>

Family Violence

1800 737 732 (1800 RESPECT)

24-hour sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling helpline for any Australian who has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/>

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/languages>