



Young and Pregnant



If you are pregnant, or think that you might be, you can find information or get help from lots of places. It is important to speak to someone as soon as you can.

Whatever your situation there is support available for you.

The possibility of an unplanned pregnancy can be an overwhelming experience.

If you think you may be pregnant - firstly, find out if you **are**.

The first sign is usually a missed period following sexual intercourse. Then you may experience breast tenderness and nausea that may occur soon after the missed period. If you have experienced the above symptoms, you need to have a pregnancy test. To do this, you can:

- See your GP confidentially
- Obtain a home pregnancy testing kit from a pharmacy.
- Confirm the result of a pregnancy test by seeing your GP

If you are not pregnant:

This is an important time to think about the future. You may have experienced a lot of anxiety over the last few weeks.

Is it worth the worry? Are you ready for pregnancy?

If you wish to avoid the distress of an unplanned pregnancy in the future, talking to a counsellor or to your doctor may help you to consider your options regarding future sexual activity and/or contraception.

This may also be a good time to discuss the situation with your partner to explore your feelings about pregnancy i.e. Is the relationship ready? What options might we have considered if the test result was positive? What does this mean for the future of our relationship? What plans should we put in place to avoid pregnancy in the future?

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If you are pregnant:

You may feel very anxious about telling your parent(s), afraid of their possible anger or disappointment. Perhaps another adult you can trust e.g. school counsellor could talk with you about these concerns initially.

There are a number of options to consider. It is important that you take some time to think about what you want and not be pressured into a decision by others.

Initially, you may be in shock and find it hard to think. This is very normal. It usually takes time before it is possible to think clearly about what might be the best thing to do.

If you decide to keep your baby there is lots of help within your reach, but you will need to contact someone to talk things over. A visit to your doctor will be confidential and he/she will refer you to local support agencies.

Try to speak to an adult you trust, they will be able to offer practical advice and help you obtain the care you need.

The following websites are designed to help you, there are also help lines so that you can talk to someone confidentially about your concerns and questions.

www.careconfidential.com Care Confidential

www.brook.org.uk 0800 018 5023

www.ruthinking.co.uk Sexwise 0800 28 29 30

www.fpa.org.uk Family Planning Association 0845 310 1334

<http://www.ymtb.org/advice.asp>

Worth Talking About – if you think you may be pregnant, you can get confidential advice from the Worth Talking About helpline on 0300 123 2930. Find out about doing a pregnancy test.

The Young Woman's Guide to Pregnancy

The Young Woman's Guide to Pregnancy is written specifically for women under the age of 20 and includes the real pregnancy experiences of young mums. It is produced by the charity Tommy's and is available free to 16-19-year-olds through the Tommy's website.

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Carrying on with your education while you're pregnant

Becoming a mother doesn't have to mean the end of your education. If you are still of compulsory school age (any time before the last Friday in June of the year of your 16th birthday), your school should not exclude you on grounds of pregnancy or health and safety issues connected with your pregnancy. However, they may talk to you about making alternative arrangements for your education. You will be allowed up to 18 calendar weeks off school before and after the birth.

After your return to education, you can receive help with childcare costs through the Care to Learn scheme. Care to Learn also provides support with childcare costs for teenage parents above compulsory school age who want to take up learning.

For more information about Care to Learn, call 0800 121 8989.

Finding somewhere to live when you're pregnant

Many young mothers want to carry on living with their own family until they are ready to move on. If you are unable to live with your family, your local authority may be able to help you with housing. Some local authorities provide specialised accommodation where young mothers can live independently while getting support and advice from trained workers.

For more information about housing, contact your local authority.



Abortion

Everyone has different reactions to finding out they're pregnant. Some people will be delighted; others will feel shocked or worried. Everybody will need time to think and some information about what to do next.

If you are pregnant and if you are less than 24 weeks pregnant (a doctor can tell you how far along you are) there are three options available to you and you have the right to choose any one of them:

- Continuing the pregnancy and raising the child
- Continuing the pregnancy and placing the child for adoption
- Ending the pregnancy by having an abortion

For some people, making a decision about pregnancy is easy. For others, it might be difficult. However easy or hard you find the decision, it is your decision to make. The more you feel you have made your own choice, the better you will feel in the future.

If you feel it would help, you can speak to someone at a Brook service, a sexual health clinic or another young people's service. A counsellor can listen to how you're feeling, answer any questions you might have and give you lots of information and support to help you make a decision that feels right for you. There are also many other organisations that can help you such as the British Pregnancy Advisory Services (BPAS) (03457 30 40 30), Marie Stopes UK (0345 300 80 90) and the Pregnancy Advisory Service (0845 359 66 66).

Here are some quick links to advice and information on a range of things you might have questions about:

- *How to take a pregnancy test*
- *All about emergency contraception*
- *Information about having a baby*
- *Advice on abortion*
- *Having an abortion if you're under 16*
- *How abortions are carried out.*



Abortion

How do I get an abortion?

You need to be referred by a doctor to get an abortion on the NHS. There are usually three stages to the referral process.

First, visit a GP or contraception clinic. They can refer you to NHS abortion services and discuss your options with you. If you're under 25, you can also go to a young people's service such as [Brook](#).

The next stage is an assessment appointment at the clinic or hospital where the abortion will be carried out. At this appointment, the doctor or nurse will explain the different types of [abortion](#) and will be able to talk things over with you if you wish.

Finally, you will be given another appointment at the hospital or clinic to have the abortion.

Alternatively, you can go directly to an independent abortion provider such as [bpas](#) (the British Pregnancy Advisory Service) or [Marie Stopes UK](#), which can provide abortions on the NHS as well as private abortions that you pay for.

You can find your nearest contraceptive clinic or genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic by using the [sexual health service search](#). Or you can look in your local phone directory or on the [FPA website](#). Young people can visit the Brook website to find their nearest [Brook centre](#).

You can also pay for an abortion at a private clinic. The cost (around £400 or more) depends on how far along the pregnancy you are and the type of abortion you're having. You can contact a private clinic without seeing a GP, and you can find one through organisations such as:

- [FPA](#)
- [bpas](#)
- [Marie Stopes UK](#)
- local sexual health services

How late into the pregnancy can I have an abortion?

Abortion is legal in Great Britain at any time up to 24 weeks of pregnancy. The majority of abortions are carried out before 13 weeks, and most of the rest before 20 weeks.

There are some exceptions. If the mother's life is at risk, or if the child would be born with a severe physical or mental disability, an abortion may be carried out after 24 weeks.

What are my options?

It largely depends on how far into the pregnancy you are. A doctor can talk you through the different methods available. See [abortion: how it is performed](#) to find out about the different types of abortion and when they can be carried out.

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Abortion

How long will I have to wait?

Waiting times vary around the country, but, as a rule, you should not have to wait for more than two weeks from your initial appointment to having an abortion.

Can I be refused an abortion?

It's rare for anyone to be refused an abortion. A doctor may have moral objections to abortion, but if that's the case they should refer you to another doctor or nurse who can help. It can be difficult to get later abortions, so the earlier you seek help the better. By law, two doctors have to agree that you can have an abortion. Usually this is the first doctor you see and a second doctor who will perform the abortion, or one who works at the contraceptive clinic or hospital.

Will it be confidential?

Yes, all information is kept confidential and nobody else will know about it, not even your partner or parents. You can also ask the hospital or clinic not to inform your GP. If you are under 16, your doctor does not have to mention it to your parents. He or she will encourage you to involve your parents or another supportive adult, but you don't have to so long as the doctor believes that you're competent and can make the decision yourself.

Can I choose where to have an abortion?

Yes. You can ask to have the abortion somewhere other than your local clinic or hospital if you wish.

Can I get any counselling before or afterwards?

Most abortion services offer counselling if you feel you need help with any worries or feelings you're having. It's normal to experience a range of emotions after an abortion, such as relief, sadness, happiness or feelings of loss. Each woman's response is unique. To find out what support is available in your area, ask your GP or a doctor or nurse at your contraception clinic.

Find [counselling services near you](#).

Will having an abortion affect my chances of having a baby in the future?

If there were no problems with the abortion, such as infection, then it will not affect your chances of becoming pregnant in the future, although you may have a slightly higher risk of premature birth.