

Work and benefits. Having a baby does not come cheap, and there may be a change in your household income. The 'Parents Guide to Money' is a pack developed to give you information on all financial aspects of the arrival of a new baby including budgeting, benefits and work options. Your midwife will be able to advise you where to get this pack. You should discuss your options regarding maternity leave and pay with your personnel officer or employer early in pregnancy; ensure everything is in writing. An FW8 certificate will be issued in early pregnancy entitling you to free prescriptions and dental treatment. Your midwife will also supply you with a maternity certificate at 20 weeks of pregnancy (Mat B1) to claim your entitlement. Families on certain benefits can get some support known as Healthy Start and will receive vouchers for free milk, fruit, vegetables and vitamins.

Healthy eating and drinking. Make sure you eat a variety of different foods to get the right balance of nutrients for your growing baby and for your body to deal with the changes taking place. It is important to prepare and cook your food carefully to prevent food poisoning. Foods such as ready meals, meat, poultry, shellfish and eggs need to be thoroughly cooked. Avoid pâté and mould-ripened soft cheeses; liver and liver products; peanuts and unpasteurised milk. Have no more than two portions of oily fish a week and avoid marlin, swordfish and shark. It is advised that you take supplements of folic acid, which helps to prevent abnormalities in the baby, eg spina bifida. The recommended dose is 0.4mg per day for at least 8 weeks before pregnancy, and up to 12 weeks into the pregnancy. If you have diabetes or are taking anti-epileptic drugs or have a family history of fetal anomalies, the recommended dose is 5mg per day. **Vitamin D** is needed for healthy bone development. To protect your baby and yourself from the problems caused by low levels, a 10mcgs Vitamin D supplement is recommended as found in the Healthy Start Vitamins. Vitamin A supplements should NOT be taken in pregnancy and any other supplements should only be taken after checking with your midwife. If you require more advice about your diet your midwife can refer you to a dietician. **Weight control.** It is important to accept you are going to put weight on in your pregnancy. The normal changes in your body during pregnancy and the growing baby can add up to an average weight gain of around 11kg. The more weight you put on above the recommended amount in pregnancy, the more weight you will be left carrying after the birth of your baby.

- **Caffeine** is a stimulant that is contained in tea, coffee and cola drinks. Too much caffeine should be avoided as it is passed through the placenta and may affect your baby.
- **Alcohol** increases the risk of miscarriage or may lead to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, resulting in severe abnormalities. Pregnant women should avoid drinking alcohol. If you choose to drink during pregnancy, you should drink no more than 1-2 units, once or twice a week. A unit of alcohol = half a pint of beer/ lager, or a single measure of spirits or a small glass of wine. Getting drunk or binge drinking could harm your unborn baby.
- **Drugs:** Taking street drugs during pregnancy is not recommended as it may seriously harm you and your baby. Over-the-counter medicines should also be avoided.

Smoking. When you smoke tobacco, carbon monoxide, nicotine and other toxic chemicals cross the placenta directly into the baby's blood stream - so the baby smokes with you. This will reduce its oxygen and nourishment, and put it at risk of low birth weight, premature birth, and other problems. The sooner you stop smoking the better, to give your baby a healthy start in life. Your midwife can arrange a referral to your local smoking cessation coordinator or group (see also NHS Pregnancy Smoking Helpline, page 22). Cannabis smoking should also be avoided during pregnancy.

Travel. If you are planning to travel abroad, you should discuss flying, vaccinations and travel insurance with your midwife or doctor. Long-haul flights can increase the risk of venous thrombosis.

Car safety. To protect you and your unborn baby, always wear a seatbelt with the diagonal strap across your body between your breasts and the lap belt over your upper thighs. The straps then lie above and below your 'bump', not over it. Also, make sure all baby/child seats are fitted correctly according to British Safety Standards.

Relationships. Some women find pregnancy to be a time of increased stress and physical discomfort. It can greatly affect your emotional state, your body image and relationships with others. If you feel anxious or worried about anything, you can discuss your problems in confidence with your midwife or doctor.

Domestic violence. 1 in 4 women experience domestic violence at some point in their lives, and many cases start during pregnancy. It can take many forms, including physical, sexual, financial control, mental or emotional abuse. Where abuse already exists, it has been shown that it may worsen during pregnancy and after the birth. Domestic violence can lead to serious complications which affect you and your baby. You can speak in confidence to your healthcare team who can offer help and support. Or you may prefer to contact a support agency such as The National Domestic Violence Helpline (see page 22).

Exercise. Regular exercise is important to keep you fit and supple. Make sure your instructor knows you are pregnant. Provided you are healthy and have discussed this with your midwife, exercise such as swimming or aquanatal classes are safe. However scuba diving and any vigorous exercise or contact sports should be avoided. It is recommended you do pelvic floor exercises daily during pregnancy. You should aim for eight contractions three times a day; your midwife will advise you on how to do these.

Parent education. Expectant mothers who attend classes and prepare for birth and parenthood find that it helps them to cope better. The preparation also gives you the confidence to make your own, personal choices. Ask your midwife what is available in your area to suit you. There are often also special classes for teenagers, mothers with twins and non-English speaking parents.

Newborn screening. After birth, your baby will be offered some screening tests. The newborn hearing screen is a quick test to detect hearing loss and the blood spot test is a simple blood test to find those very few babies who may be affected by phenylketonuria, congenital hypothyroidism, MCADD (Medium Chain acyl-coA Dehydrogenase Deficiency) and haemoglobinopathy disorders. Two detailed examinations of your baby will be performed, one within 72 hours of the birth and one when your baby is 6 - 8 weeks old. These include examinations of the baby's eyes, heart and lungs sounds, nervous system, abdomen and hips, all findings will be discussed with you. Your midwife will give you a leaflet explaining all of these tests.

Feeding your baby. Nature provides breast milk - the perfect milk to feed your baby, balanced to suit his/her needs. It protects against gastro-enteritis and diarrhoea, urinary tract infections, ear infections and chest infections; it may also protect against allergies and diabetes. For you, breast feeding reduces the incidence of pre-menopausal breast cancer, ovarian cancer and hip fractures in later life. Almost all women can breastfeed, but it often needs practice and support to get it right. Discuss your options with your partner, family and friends. It is possible to breastfeed even if you plan to return to work soon after the baby is born. Your midwife / health visitor / support group will help you with this. If you did not manage to feed your previous baby, consider it again for this pregnancy. The majority of mothers succeed the second time. If you decide not to breastfeed, your midwife can advise you on bottlefeeding and sterilisation techniques to ensure safe feeding.

Plans for Pregnancy and Parenthood

Topics	Not applicable	Discussed	Signature* and Date	Your intentions or preferences	Leaflets given
Parents Guide to Money pack		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Employment rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Maternity benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Healthy eating		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Folic acid		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Caffeine		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Alcohol		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Drugs		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Carbon Monoxide Testing		<input type="checkbox"/>		Result _____	
Smoking					
Effect on baby	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Effect on mother	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Smoking cessation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		First appointment: ____/____/____	
Travel safety		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Seat belts		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Feelings about pregnancy		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Stresses in pregnancy		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Support at home		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Sex in pregnancy		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Exercise (Inc. pelvic floor)		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Aquanatal		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Parent education		<input type="checkbox"/>		First appointment: ____/____/____	
Hospital visit		<input type="checkbox"/>		Date for visit: ____/____/____	
Hearing and blood spot test explained		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Preparing for your new baby					
Home environment		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Equipment		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Cot safety		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Infant feeding					
'Baby friendly initiative'					
Health benefits for baby		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Health benefits for mother		<input type="checkbox"/>			
No other food or drink needed by baby (for up to 6 months)		<input type="checkbox"/>			
'From bump to breast feeding' DVD		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Skin-to-skin contact after delivery keeps baby warm and calm; promotes bonding, helps breastfeeding		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Effective positioning and attachment		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Baby-led feeding and feeding cues		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Effect of teats, dummies, nipple shields (may interfere with breast feeding)		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Rooming-in / keeping baby nearby		<input type="checkbox"/>			

* Signatures must be listed on page 22 for identification

Name
Unit No