Maternity Information Package
Your guide to Pregnancy, Birth and Early Parenting
Contact Telephone Numbers

If intrastate and urgent assistance or advice is required contact:

Launceston General Hospital  (03) 6777 8960
Mersey Community Hospital (Latrobe/Devonport)  1800 940 766
North West Regional Hospital (Burnie)  1800 940 747
Royal Hobart Hospital Pregnancy Assessment Clinic  (03) 6166 8352
Ambulance Tasmania  000

When you should contact the Pregnancy Assessment Clinic; Birth Suite or your health provider:

- If your baby stops moving or there is an obvious reduction or change in your baby’s movements at any time in your pregnancy. Please refer to page 17 for further information or https://sanda.psanz.com.au/resources/pregnancy/ or stillaware.org
- Trauma to abdomen, assault, serious fall, or car accident
- Sharp pains in your abdomen with or without bleeding
- Vaginal bleeding at any time
- Recurring and persistent headaches;
- Persistent itchy skin, especially of hands and feet
- Sudden onset of swelling to face, hands or feet
- Blurred vision or spots before your eyes
- Pain or burning when you pass urine
- Labour has started and you feel it may be time to come to hospital
- You are at home labouring and require advice or reassurance from a Midwife
- If you are less than 36 weeks and are experiencing contractions or leaking amniotic fluid (from around the baby)
- Rupture of membranes (leaking fluid from around the baby) and you are concerned about the colour/odour, or labour does not commence
- You have been told your baby is NOT head down and start to labour or rupture your membranes
- Booked for a caesarean birth and labour starts
- If you identify any other pregnancy related concerns that you need advice for prior to your next antenatal appointment
- Severe nausea and vomiting
Congratulations on your pregnancy and welcome to The Tasmanian Health Service Womens Adolescent and Children’s Services (THS WACS)

The Tasmanian Health Service believe it is your right to receive care which is of a high standard in accordance with the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights (www.safetyandquality.gov.au). Our aim is to provide safe, well planned and well communicated care through a collaborative approach where you are encouraged to be actively involved.

This booklet has been designed to provide you and your family with valuable information regarding pregnancy, birth and early parenting. You are encouraged to adopt an active role in your pregnancy and to be involved in making informed decisions about your care. Whilst this booklet is comprehensive we may not have provided all the information you feel you require and suggest that you attend our antenatal classes, talk with staff and refer to recommended resources such as The Raising Children Network (www.raisingchildren.net.au). We recognise that everyone learns differently so please use the approach that benefits you best to allow an informed pregnancy journey and transition into parenting.

Further THS WACS continually strive towards improving our services and value your feedback.

‘Nothing About You Without You’
Your Rights

Rights and responsibilities - what you should know as a patient

Your rights are:

• To receive free public hospital services as a public patient;
• To receive treatment on the basis of your health needs, regardless of your financial or health insurance status;
• To have access to public hospital services regardless of where you live in Australia;
• To be treated with respect, compassion and consideration of privacy which takes into account your background, needs and wishes;
• To participate fully in the decisions about your care including admission, discharge and arrangements for continuing care;
• To be given a clear explanation of the proposed treatment including risk and alternatives, before you decide whether you will agree to the treatment;
• To seek a second medical opinion;
• To give your informed consent (except in exceptional circumstances) before a procedure is carried out, including consent to participation in undergraduate health professional teaching or medical research;
• To withdraw your consent or refuse further treatment;
• To have access to information contained in your medical record;
• To expect that information about your hospital care will be confidential unless the law allows otherwise;
• To receive interpreter services if you are experiencing difficulty communicating with staff; and
• To commend health workers, to complain about your health care and/ or to be advised of the procedure for expressing concern about your care.

Your responsibilities

There are a number of things that you can do to help health workers provide better care for you. You should:

• Provide information that enables health care professionals to give you appropriate care and advice;
• Treat seriously any decision made in partnership with a health professional regarding your treatment;
• Comply with your prescribed treatment or tell your health care professional of your intention not to do so; and
• Conduct yourself in an appropriate way so as not to interfere with the well-being or rights of other patients or staff.

Patient medical records

You have the right to ask to see information about you retained by the THS, in accordance with the Right to Information Act 2009. A fee may be incurred if you require copies. Confidentiality of your records is required under the Privacy Act 1988. Confidential information including treatment details will not be released without your consent.

Open Disclosure

All THS hospitals respect this right, and are committed to improving the safety and quality of care we deliver. That’s why we have a policy of open disclosure for when things go wrong with the care we provide. Open disclosure assists patients when they are unintentionally harmed by their health care.

For further information visit the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care website www.safetyandquality.gov.au

Security

Any behaviour which disrupts the ability of our staff to fulfil their duty of care to patients will not be tolerated. It is also our right to be safe at work.

Should you, or your visitors, display such behaviour you/they may be asked to leave.

Consumer Liaison Feedback

If you are worried about anything to do with your hospital experience please feel free to let us know. By providing us with your valuable feedback we have the opportunity to continually improve the service we provide.

Inpatient Experience Survey

The THS also provides the opportunity for feedback through an inpatient experience survey available at your hospital.

Everyone has the right to feel safe and be safe

STOP FAMILY VIOLENCE

It is a crime and help is available!

Police Emergency for urgent help or reporting 000

Court Support & Liaison Service For victims of family violence to access and understand the legal system

Family Violence Response & Referral Line: Freecall 1300 663 773

Crisis Counselling: Freecall 1800 608 122

Court Support & Liaison Service For victims of family violence to access & understand the legal system: Freecall 1300 663 773

Emergency Shelters 24 hour Services - Women & Children

Launceston
Magnolia Place
Womens Shelter: (03) 6344 5322
Kariinya Young Women's shelter: (03) 6331 0774
Yemaya Women’s Support Service: (03) 6334 0305
Young Mums & Bubs Support (03) 63 34 8403

Launceston - Laurel House Sexual Assault Support Service (03) 6334 2740
State-wide 1800 697 877

North West
Warawee Women’s Shelter (women and women with children): (03) 6425 1382
Oakleigh House (men, women and families): (03) 6431 5791
Youth, Family and Community Connections - Burnie Youth Accommodation Services (male and female 13-20 years) (03) 6431 9230

Youth, Family and Community Connections - Burnie Crisis Accommodation Service (male and female 13-20 years): (03) 6424 7375

Wyndarra Centre Inc.: (03) 6452 1981

West Coast Crisis Accommodation and Referral Service: (03) 6471 4748 or 0409 197 031

All calls are treated in the strictest of confidence; if preferable you do not have to provide your name.

You can also speak with one of our Social Workers whilst accessing care at any stage.
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Care in Pregnancy
Care in pregnancy

Your care would have begun with your General Practitioner (GP), by confirming your pregnancy, taking a comprehensive medical and obstetric history, ordering pregnancy blood tests and an obstetric ultrasound, and a referral to your closest THS public hospital that also indicates your preferred model of care.

After the THS receives the referral they will look at the information provided to determine the model of care that best suits your needs. For some women the model of care may not be determined until you have seen a doctor at the hospital clinic. You will then be notified by post of your initial appointment date and time for between 12 and 14 weeks of your pregnancy. Your initial appointment is attended by a midwife.

If your care is to be provided through Midwifery Group Practice (MGP) your midwife may phone you and arrange an appointment directly, otherwise the appointment will be posted to you and may be scheduled within 4-6 weeks of the first contact.

Women sometimes request that their care be provided by female health professionals only. At the THS most of our midwives and many of our doctors are female. However, it may not always be possible for you to see a female at appointments or upon admission to the hospital. Our staff respect the concerns some women may have about cultural and gender issues and if possible will try and accommodate your needs.

Options of care during pregnancy - North

At the THS we believe it is important to involve you in all aspects of your care in pregnancy. Statewide services do vary so what is available in Hobart may be different in Launceston or on the North West coast. There may be circumstances when one or more of these options may not be suitable for you due to medical or other reasons. Please feel free to discuss your options with your midwife and/or doctor.

Antenatal visits will not cover all your educational requirements for labour, birth and the transition to parenting. For this reason the THS recommends Birth and Parenting Classes along with any additional classes offered that may benefit your specific needs. Further, research supports the benefits of attending a tour to familiarise yourself with the environment in which you will labour and commence your transition to parenting. Whilst on the tour, you will learn valuable information like after hours access, parking possibilities, what happens in hospital and length of stay.

In the THS midwives work in all models of care so if you have medical or other circumstances resulting in the need for you to be cared for in a medical clinic you will still see midwives during your antenatal visits.

Exclusion from Midwifery based care may occur if there is any deviation from a normal risk pregnancy, unless you are with MGP where collaborative care may be given between your midwife and our doctors’.

Some women receiving Midwifery care may be required to have an appointment with one of our doctors at 36 weeks due to a medical reason like a previous caesarean birth or diet controlled gestational diabetes.

TEAM Midwives
You will be cared for by a team of midwives, in consultation with our doctors, during your pregnancy. Where possible the TEAM midwives will be available to care for you during birth and after your baby is born. However, we cannot guarantee you will have met your birth midwife. This gives you the chance to get to know some of the midwives who may care for you.

Midwifery Group Practice (MGP)
You will be cared for by a primary (and backup) midwife who you will get to know well for your pregnancy, labour, birth and postnatal needs. This model of care offers the most continuity possible and includes a shorter hospital stay of 4-6 hours after the birth. Then you will have one on one visits in your home for up to 10-14 days according to your assessed needs. The pregnancy care will occur primarily in community clinics with the venue negotiated directly with you.

Midwives Satellite Clinics
Satellite clinics make our services conveniently available to women within their local community. To find out if there is a clinic in your area ask your midwife or contact Women’s Health Clinic to find out what is available. The clinics are run by midwives and are for normal risk women. These midwives give antenatal care only and will not be available for your labour and/or birth.

Medical Clinic
Women are referred to Medical clinics due to health needs. These models of care encompass a team approach between the obstetric doctors and the clinic midwives who are both available to complete antenatal appointments. There are varying types of medical clinics available thus ensuring best care depending on your circumstances. If you are required to be cared for in one of our Medical Clinics this may be discussed when you first see you GP or at your first appointment at the Women’s Health Clinic.

Launceston General Hospital Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QV Outpatient Department - Clinic</td>
<td>(03) 6777 8980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment &amp; Enquiries</td>
<td>1300 977 694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthing Suite - Ward 4B 24hrs Advice</td>
<td>(03) 6777 8960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy Assessment Clinic (PAC)</td>
<td>1300 977 694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth &amp; Parenting Classes Educator Enquiries</td>
<td>(03) 6777 8995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment &amp; Class Enquiries</td>
<td>1300 977 694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied Health - Social Work</td>
<td>(03) 6777 6245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied Health - Physiotherapy</td>
<td>(03) 6777 6216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGH Enquiries</td>
<td>(03) 6777 6777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGH Radiology</td>
<td>(03) 6777 6085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEM Hospital - Scottsdale</td>
<td>(03) 6778 8529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment &amp; Class Enquiries</td>
<td>(03) 6778 8522</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Pregnancy Care in Your Area - NORTH 5
It is very important that you come to all your antenatal/pregnancy checks, to ensure the well-being of you and your unborn baby.

Share care with your GP

Your family doctor, in consultation with hospital doctors and midwives, will care for you. You still need to book in at the hospital and then have visits at 36 weeks, if you are having a VBAC (vaginal birth after caesarean) or planned caesarean section and if you are overdue. Some situations may exclude you from GP share care, those include high BMI, twins, some medical health conditions or previous pregnancy problems.

Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Service

Social worker services are available at the LGH to assist you with further referrals. Please discuss with you midwife or doctor or GP. The Mental Health Service Hotline is also available 24 hours a day freecall 1800 332 338.

Location of Classes

Launceston General Hospital

QVOPD Function Room, 3rd Floor, LGH, Charles Street, Launceston.

We advise you arrive 10 minutes prior to commencement time.

Scottsdale - NEMSH Classes

Classes are offered three times a year on demand. Classes run over 4 weeks and last for 2 hours. Please contact (03) 6778 8522 for all enquiries & bookings.

Birth and Parenting classes

We recommend you enrol in a birth and parenting class, especially if this is your first baby. Birth and parenting classes are facilitated by midwives. The classes cover self help skills, an understanding of labour and birth, feeding, unexpected outcomes, natural and medical pain relief options to help make informed choices. Transition to parenting can be a busy but exciting time. We offer you some strategies to cope with the early days at home and give you information regarding follow up support in the community.

Antenatal education

The Tasmanian Health Service (THS) Women’s Adolescents and Children’s Service’s (WACS) offers a variety of antenatal class options. Antenatal classes are designed to help you with your physical, mental and emotional preparation for pregnancy, birth, early parenting and feeding your baby.

The sessions are relaxed and informative, giving you and your support person, the opportunity to meet other families and to discuss ideas, thoughts and choices for birthing and parenting. It is important to book your classes early to ensure you do not miss out on the time that best suits. Please check with your midwife for updates on sessions available.

There are a number of different class structures designed to suit individual needs. Daytime, evening and weekend times slots are available. It is best to attend your birth & parenting classes from 26 weeks gestation onwards & Breastfeeding workshops from 34 weeks gestation.

Bookings for all classes are essential and can be made through the QVOPD reception or by phoning 1300 977 694 between 8.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

There is no cost if you have a Medicare card.

Breastfeeding Classes

Breastmilk is the most nutritious food you can give your baby. Breastfeeding is natural but a learned skill. We recommend you attend antenatal breastfeeding classes, which are available during the day and evening. If you have specific concerns you can ask to book a one on one appointment with a lactation consultant.

Class Times:

Breastfeeding Session Times at the LGH:

Workshops are two hours in duration and are held Monday evenings fortnightly; Sundays monthly & Thursdays monthly. Partners are welcome.

Birth and Parenting Educator

A referral from a midwife or doctor is required but midwives working in this area can assist in the following circumstances.

- People with specific birthing and/or parenting issues;
- If this is not your first baby but you require an update of information in a specific area.
- Women having twins;
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who require one to one parenting discussions with an interpreter; and
- People who would like the opportunity to debrief after a difficult birth when booking in for subsequent pregnancies.

Tours of the Maternity Unit

Tours of the LGH maternity facilities are conducted regularly.

Enquiries to the QVOPD reception or telephone 1300 977 694 between 8.30 am and 4:30 pm Monday to Friday.

Remember you need to book for all education sessions.

All THS hospitals are accredited Baby Friendly Hospitals and follow the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. The full Breastfeeding policy is available on request.
The birthing suites are family focused, and designed for you to labour, give birth and spend time with your baby and partner after the birth.

Maternity Unit patient accommodation

Rooming In

The Maternity Unit has a rooming in policy, which means your baby is with you 24 hours a day. During your stay in the Maternity Unit you are responsible for the care, supervision and safety of your baby. It is your responsibility not to leave your baby unattended.

Tell staff if you intend to leave the ward for any reason. If you leave your room/ward during visiting hours ask a family member to watch your baby.

Please note we do not have a nursery for well babies. Having your baby room in with you ensures you start to recognise their needs for feeding and comfort from birth and is part of the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative in all THS hospitals.

Birthing Suites

Birth Suites are situated on Ward 4B and are designed for you to labour, give birth and spend the first few hours with your baby.

If you have chosen to stay in hospital, you will be transferred to the maternity ward when you and your baby have been checked and are ready to do so.

Ward Rooms

Ward 4O provides Maternity Ward Accommodation at the LGH.

Currently Ward 4O has 10 single rooms. The remaining 9 rooms are shared twin accommodation with a shared bathroom. Your partner cannot stay in these rooms. The single rooms are generally used for women with specific medical requirements or are privately insured.

You will be cared for in a ward room if you are admitted antenatally, or for your postnatal care. If you are having a planned caesarean section you will be admitted to Ward 4O prior to your operation.

Social Work Department

Provides patients with social and emotional support, practical information related to pregnancy and assist with discharge planning. The services are free and available to patients and their families. Social Workers assist people to make decisions about things that are important to them. Social Workers encourage people to be involved in their own care and to explore all available choices. If you would like to speak to a social worker, please ask the staff or contact the Social Work Department on the number provided in the front of this booklet.

Pregnancy Assessment Clinic (PAC)

The Pregnancy Assessment Clinic (PAC) is located within the QVOPD on Level 3 of the LGH. It is a Monday - Friday clinic available to women for care between 8:30 am & 4:30 pm.

PAC midwives see women for assessment by appointment throughout their pregnancy if there are concerns or for treatment and review of both mother & baby.

You may be referred to the PAC for assessment by your Doctor or Midwife.

When you come to PAC, the midwives and doctor will assess the well being of you and your baby. After this assessment you will either go home or be admitted to the Maternity Unit.

If you go home from PAC, it is important that you follow the advice given and attend any follow up appointments.

Please do not hesitate to ring PAC if you have any further concerns.

Limited space within this area results in lack of privacy for intimate procedures. To avoid over crowding:

• Only one visitor/support person is permitted to stay with you at the discretion of PAC midwives;
• The visitor/support person is required to remain with you behind the curtains; and
• No children are allowed.

Care before being booked in

If you are pregnant but not yet booked in to access care at the THS and experience pain or bleeding you will need to visit the Emergency Department of your closest THS hospital.

You may also be referred to the PAC for assessment by your Doctor or Midwife.
Arriving at the Maternity Unit for Elective Admissions

Patients requiring admission to the Maternity Unit between 7am and 4.30pm for a planned caesarean section - Monday to Friday should go to Ward 4O on Level 4 of the LGH.

If you are in labour or having a planned induction of labour please go straight to Ward 4B - Birthing Suite on Level 4 of the LGH.

Telephone contact for women in labour is (03) 6777 8960.

Visitors

The Maternity Unit security doors will be closed at all times. Only visitors with valid entry reasons will be permitted access to the Maternity Unit.

Visiting Hours: 11.00am to 2.00pm

Quiet Time: 2.00pm to 4.00pm

Parking

Car Parks are privately owned and operate paid parking in and around the LGH.

Valid tickets must be displayed at all times. Please ensure that you have read signage. Ticket machines are available in all car parks & if coins are needed there is a machine available near the front entrance of LGH on Level 3 Charles Street entrance.

Students

All THS hospitals are teaching hospitals of the University of Tasmania, and have the responsibility for teaching a wide range of students in the health care professions. We ask for your permission to involve students in your care, this will help to educate the students who will be the health care professionals of the future.

Interpreter service

The THS provides interpreters as required, to interpret medical information for patients of non English speaking background. This service is provided to ensure the best clinical outcomes for the patient are achieved.

The Hospital does not use family members or friends to interpret medical information, other than in the case of emergencies.

Please discuss any interpreter needs with your doctor of midwife.

Aboriginal Health Liaison Service

An Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer (AHLO) is employed by the hospital to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people access, understand and enhance their hospital care. The AHLO is here to offer you and your family support. You can ask the staff to arrange this for you. The AHLO Service is available to both patients and their families.

Refugee/Migrant Liaison Officer

The Refugee/Migrant Liaison Officer is employed by the Hospital to assist patients and their families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to fully access and benefit from the hospital and support services. Staff can arrange a referral for you too if needed.

Smoking

All THS hospitals are smoke free environments for patients and visitors. This includes the hospital grounds.

Television

Channel 110 is our free educational station which covers topics such as breastfeeding tips, and caring for your newborn baby. Overhead televisions (free to air channels) are available for hire. Please enquire about details upon admission.

Kiosk

9.00am - 7.00pm, Monday - Friday & Saturday
1.00pm - 7.00pm, Sunday

Meal times

Approximate times are: Breakfast 8.00am, Lunch 12 midday, and Dinner 5.00pm. Snack items are available in the pantry on the ward (for mothers only).

Please advise us if you have any special dietary requirements. For example if you are diabetic or vegetarian, and we will advise catering services. All food and drink placed in the pantry fridge must be labelled with your name and a date (labels provided, just ask the midwife caring for you).

Safety – small electrical appliances

For safety reasons patients are discouraged from bringing small electrical items (ie, computers, electronic tablets etc) into THS hospitals. However, if you do bring small electrical appliances into hospital you must comply with THS policy. Further details on the policy can be obtained from ward/unit staff.

Prior to bringing small electrical appliances into hospital they must be tested and tagged to ensure compliance with electrical safety standards (at your expense). The THS does not accept any responsibility/liability for damage or theft of appliances.

Booking tests and where to go

Ultrasound Department

The Ultrasound Department is located in the Radiology Department on Level 3 of the LGH. Your scan request form will be given to you at booking in & you can book directly at the Radiology Department or you can phone them on (03) 6777 6085.

Pathology Tests and Bookings

It is advised that you have all blood tests ordered by your GP taken before your booking in appointment, so that appropriate care can be arranged for you.

The diabetes in pregnancy blood test (POGTT or Fasting BSL) requires you to have fasted from the night before. Your Midwife or GP will give you a written instruction leaflet. It is best to present to pathology early, and allow 2-3 hours for the completion of this test.

LGH Pathology is located on Level 2 and can be accessed from the Frankland Street Entrance. Pathology parking is available here also.
Options of care during pregnancy - North West

At the THS we believe it is important to involve you in all aspects of your care in pregnancy. Statewide services do vary so what is available in Hobart may be different in Launceston or on the North West coast. There may be circumstances when one or more of these options may not be suitable for you due to medical or other reasons. Please feel free to discuss your options with your midwife and/or doctor.

Antenatal visits will not cover all your educational requirements for labour, birth and the transition to parenting. For this reason the THS recommends Birth and Parenting Classes along with any additional classes offered that may benefit your specific needs. Further, research supports the benefits of attending a tour to familiarise yourself with the environment in which you will labour and commence your transition to parenting. Whilst on the tour, you will learn valuable information like after hours access, parking possibilities, what happens in hospital and length of stay.

In the THS midwives work in all models of care so if you have medical or other circumstances resulting in the need for you to be cared for in a medical clinic you will still see midwives during your antenatal visits.

Exclusion from Midwifery based care may occur if there is any deviation from a normal risk pregnancy, unless you are with MGP where collaborative care may be given between your midwife and our doctors’.

Some women receiving Midwifery care may be required to have an appointment with one of our doctors at 34 - 36 weeks due to a medical reason like a previous caesarean birth or diet controlled gestational diabetes.

Midwifery Group Practice (MGP)

You will be cared for by a primary (and backup) midwife who you will get to know well for your pregnancy, labour, birth and postnatal needs. This model of care offers the most continuity possible and includes a shorter hospital stay of 4-12 hours after the birth. Then you will have one on one visits in your home for up to 10-14 days according to your assessed needs. The pregnancy care will occur primarily in community clinics with the venue negotiated directly with you.

Midwives Satellite Clinics

Satellite clinics make our services conveniently available to women within their local community. To find out if there is a clinic in your area ask your midwife or contact Women’s Health Clinic to find out what is available. The clinics are run by midwives and are for normal risk women. These midwives give antenatal care only and will not be available for your labour and/or birth.

Medical Clinic

Women are referred to Medical clinics due to health needs. These models of care encompass a team approach between the Obstetric doctors and the clinic midwives who are both available to complete antenatal appointments. There are varying types of Medical Clinics available thus ensuring best care depending on your circumstances. If you are required to be cared for in one of our Medical Clinics this may be discussed when you first see your GP or at your first appointment at the Womens Health Clinic.

North West Integrated Care Services (THS & NWPH)
Contact Numbers
Women’s Health Clinic Appointments
MCH ............................................ (03) 6478 5180
NWRH ............................................ (03) 6493 6353
Pregnancy Assessment Clinic:
Mersey ............................................ 1800 940 766
Burnie ............................................. 1800 940 747

North West Private Hospital
Maternity Unit .................................. (03) 6432 6031
Lactation Consultant ...................... 0409 973 547
Interpreter Services ...................... (03) 6478 5392
Perinatal & Mental Health Services .... (03) 6478 5319
It is very important that you come to all your antenatal/pregnancy checks, to ensure the well-being of you and your unborn baby.

**Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Service**

Social worker services are available at the MCH and NWRH to assist you with further referrals. Please discuss with your midwife or doctor or GP.

The **Mental Health Service Hotline** is also available 24 hours a day freecall 1800 332 338.

Life Line: 1300 364 566

www.panda.org.au

www.beyondblue.org.au

**Antenatal education**

The Tasmanian Health Service (THS) North West Integrated Maternity Service (NWIMS) offers a variety of antenatal class options. Antenatal classes are designed to help you with your physical, mental and emotional preparation for pregnancy, birth, early parenting and feeding your baby. The sessions are relaxed and informative, giving you and your support person, the opportunity to meet other families and to discuss ideas, thoughts and choices for birthing and parenting. It is important to book your classes early to ensure you do not miss out on the time that best suits. Please check with your midwife for updates on sessions available.

Antenatal classes are run in the evenings in both Mersey and NWRH and may sometimes be available on weekends. It is best to attend your birth and parenting classes from 28 weeks gestation onwards.

**Bookings for classes will be made for you by a midwife at booking-in or another antenatal appointment.**

**Location of Classes**

Classes are conducted by Midwives at the Mersey Community Hospital and the North West Regional Hospital. You will be sent a letter with time and venue prior to the classes commencing.

**Birth and Parenting classes**

We recommend you enrol in a Birth and Parenting Class, especially if this is your or your partners first child. Birth and Parenting classes are facilitated by midwives. The classes cover self help skills, an understanding of labour and birth, feeding, unexpected outcomes, natural and medical pain relief options to help make informed choices. Transition to parenting can be a busy but exciting time. We offer you some strategies to cope with the early days at home and give you information regarding follow up support in the community.

**Please read the Maternity Information Package (this booklet) prior to attending the Birth and Parenting classes.**

Please ask your midwife for available session times, dates and venues.

**Physiotherapy**

Physiotherapy may be able to assist you further with some of the common aches & pains of pregnancy (such as back or pelvic pain and carpel tunnel syndrome). Your physiotherapist will support you to be as physically active as you can be during your pregnancy.

**Breastfeeding**

Breastmilk is the most nutritious food you can give your baby. Breastfeeding is natural but a learned skill. If you have specific concerns requiring further discussion you may book a one to one consultation. Please ask your Midwife.

**Birth and Parenting Education**

Discuss with your midwife or doctor, as educators working in this area can also assist in the following circumstances.

- People with specific birthing and/or parenting issues;
- If this is not your first baby but you require an update of information in a specific area.
- Women having twins;
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who require one to one parenting discussions with an interpreter; and
- People who would like the opportunity to debrief after a difficult birth when booking in for subsequent pregnancies.

**Tours of the Maternity Unit**

If you have not previously birthed at the NWPH it is important to attend a tour of the Maternity Unit to not only understand the process for admission but to ensure you are familiar with the environment during an important stage of your life.

Tours can be arranged by phoning (03) 6432 6000.

All THS hospitals are accredited Baby Friendly Hospitals and follow the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. The full Breastfeeding policy is available on request.
Maternity Unit patient accommodation

Rooming In

The Maternity Unit has a rooming in policy, which means your baby is with you 24 hours a day. During your stay in the Maternity Unit you are responsible for the care, supervision and safety of your baby. It is your responsibility not to leave your baby unattended.

Tell staff if you intend to leave the ward for any reason. If you leave your room/ward during visiting hours ask a family member to watch your baby.

Please note we do not have a nursery for well babies. Having your baby room in with you ensures you start to recognise their needs for feeding and comfort from birth and is part of the ‘Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative’ at the NWPH and in all THS hospitals.

Birthing Suites

NWPH’s well-appointed and spacious birthing rooms provide a comfortable and safe atmosphere for the birth of your baby. Each birthing suite is self-contained with a TV, tea/coffee making facilities, with most of the medical equipment discreetly concealed. A bath is available in each of the rooms for water immersion and water birth.

Most women want the company and support of someone they trust during labour. Our policy is that we promote only 2 support people (maximum) in the birthing suite. Please place mobile phones on silent in the birth suite. It is our request that mobile phones are only used outside of the birthing suite during labour.

It is important to note that we are unable to accommodate additional family and friends in our waiting lounge for the time you are in labour, especially after 8pm. Our waiting lounge is a small area to be shared by many clients which makes it unavailable to others should visitors be waiting for hours.

Children are not encouraged in the birthing suite. If a child is to attend the birth, please prepare them for this special occasion – what they may expect to see, hear and experience. Also, arrange for someone other than your support person to look after your child during the birth. Nursing staff are unable to look after children in the birthing suite.

Ward Rooms

The NWPH maternity unit has 4 bed rooms, they are shared and your partner cannot stay in these rooms.

Pregnancy Assessment Clinic (PAC)

The Pregnancy Assessment Clinic is the area that you need to contact if:

• You are between 20 weeks pregnant and 10 days post birth;
• You think that you are in labour
• Have a pregnancy related concern
• If you have had a fall or an accident

You can contact PAC at any time if you have any concerns. You will be able to talk to a Midwife and if needed, have a follow up visit to PAC.

North West Regional Hospital  1800 940 747
North West Private Hospital  1800 946 766
Mersey Community Hospital  1800 946 767
PAC is located in the Antenatal Clinics at both Mersey and North West regional hospitals.

When you come to PAC the Midwives and Doctor will assess the wellbeing of you and your baby.

After this appointment you will either go home or be transferred to the Maternity Unit. If you go home it is important you follow the advice given and attend any follow up appointments.

Please do not hesitate to ring PAC if you have any further concerns.

To avoid overcrowding:

• Only one visitor/support person is to stay with you at the discretion of PAC Midwives;
• The visitor/support person is required to stay with you behind the curtains; and
• No children are allowed.
Arriving at the NWPH (North West Private Hospital) Maternity Unit for Elective Admissions

Patients requiring admission for induction at the NWPH should present at the time advised to Huon Ward on the day of your induction. You will be provided with information on what is involved and what to expect.

Elective caesarean section patients will be advised of admission dates and times. You will also be given information on caesarean section when your surgery is booked.

Labour and birth

Phoning before you leave home enables the midwives to prepare for your arrival and makes the admission procedure flow more smoothly.

Midwives are available to talk with you on the phone regarding concerns about your pregnancy and whether or not you should come to hospital.

On arrival if you are in labour, please present to Huon Ward.

Telephone contact for women in labour is 1800 940 747 or North west Private Hospital (03) 6432 6031.

Visitors

It is important for you to get rest, particularly in the first few days. For this reason a rest period is encouraged after lunch and visiting hours are strictly enforced. Please ask your visitors to consider your needs while you are in hospital. Partners and children can visit all areas in the morning.

Visiting to the ‘Special Care Nursery’ is restricted to members of the immediate family and is not an area for general visiting. Please observe hand hygiene requests.

Visitors are asked to observe the unit and ward visiting hours below and be mindful of all patients when visiting the hospital.

Strictly 2pm - 4.30pm & 6pm - 7.30pm

Parking

Parking is available in the NWPH car park, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

A parking exemption voucher can be provided for 1 vehicle on the day of your baby’s birth.

Students

NWPH is a teaching hospital and has the responsibility of teaching a range of students in the health care professions.

We ask for your permission to involve students in your care, this will help to educate the students who will be the health care professionals of the future.

Interpreter service

North West Integrated Maternity Services (NWIMS) provides interpreters as required to interpret medical information for patients of non-English speaking backgrounds. This service is provided to ensure the best clinical outcomes are achieved.

NWIMS does not use family members or friends to interpret information unless in an emergency.

Aboriginal Health Liaison Service

The Social worker will provide referral to appropriate services as needed.

Multicultural and Health Diversity Officer

The Multicultural and Health Diversity officer is employed to assist patients and their families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to fully access and benefit from the hospital support services. Staff can arrange a referral for you if needed.

Smoking

All THS hospitals and NWIMS are smoke free environments for patients and visitors. This includes the hospital grounds. We thank you in advance for your cooperation in maintaining this policy.

Television

All rooms at the NWPH has a remote controlled television for patient use, they are required to be turned off by 9.30pm.

Kiosk

The NWPH kiosk is open between 8am - 2.30pm Monday to Friday.

Meal times

Your meals will be served according to your dietary needs. Please advise staff on admission of any specific dietary requirements you may have.

Your partner will be provided with a meal while you are in labour.

Safety – small electrical appliances

For safety reasons patients are discouraged from bringing small electrical items (ie, computers, electronic tablets etc) into THS hospitals. However, if you do bring small electrical appliances into hospital you must comply with THS policy. Further details on the policy can be obtained from ward/unit staff.

Prior to bringing small electrical appliances into hospital they must be tested and tagged to ensure compliance with electrical safety standards (at your expense). The THS does not accept any responsibility/liability for damage or theft of appliances.

Booking tests and where to go

Ultrasound Department

The Ultrasound Department is located at the Mersey Community Hospital ground floor or at Wenvoe Street in Devonport.

The NWRH Ultrasound department is located in the Medical Centre.

Pathology Tests and Bookings

The diabetes in pregnancy blood test (OGTT) requires you to book an appointment and present to the pathology having fasted. We recommend you book an early appointment, you will need to allow 2-3 hours.

The pathology department is located at the Mersey Community Hospital ground floor or at Oldaker Street in Devonport.

The NWRH Pathology department is located in the Medical Centre.
Antenatal tests
It is recommended that you have the following tests during your pregnancy. These test results will help in assessing the well-being of you and your baby. Your doctor or midwife can answer any questions you may have.

Blood Tests in Early Pregnancy
Blood tests are ordered by your GP and are to be checked for the following:
- Blood group, Rh factor, haemoglobin (iron) level, iron studies;
- Your immunity to Rubella (German measles);
- Vitamin D;
- Sexually transmitted diseases such as Chlamydia, Syphilis and HIV;
- Hepatitis B;
- Hepatitis C;
- Urine test to check for infection; and
- Fasting BSL or alternatively an early Glucose Tolerance Test (GTT) for some women with higher risk of diabetes in pregnancy.

Ultrasound Scan
This is a procedure which uses sound waves to form images of your baby. There are two scans routinely taken during your pregnancy. The first scan is called the dating scan and it is usually organised by your GP for between 7 and 13 weeks plus 6 days. This scan is most often used to ascertain your baby’s due date.

The second routine scan is called ‘level 2 morphology scan’ and this is done between 18 and 20 weeks of pregnancy. This is a very detailed scan that looks closely at your baby, the position of the placenta and whether your baby is growing well. The scan takes about an hour.

Early screening for Trisomy 21 (Down Syndrome), Trisomy 18 and 13
This test is available to you between 11 and 13.6 weeks gestation. It is a combined test that consists of a blood test done by 13.4 weeks gestation and a scan of your baby that shows your possible chance of having a baby with Down Syndrome, trisomy 13 or 18.

Genetic Material (DNA)
DNA is arranged in the human body in packets called chromosomes. Every cell in the human body should contain 46 chromosomes, there are two copies of chromosomes numbered 1 to 22 (one from each parent) as well as two sex chromosomes (XX girl or XY boy). Trisomy means that there are 3 copies of a certain chromosome in every cell, for example Trisomy 21 (Down Syndrome) means three copies of chromosome number 21 in each cell. This obviously affects the way a baby develops and causes conditions that may affect the babies life. Chromosomal abnormalities can occur in any pregnancy but are more common in babies of older mothers.

The first trimester screening result measures the nuchal translucency (thickness at the back of the fetal neck as seen on ultrasound) and the blood test measures the level of two hormones produced by the placenta (PAPP-A and BHCG). It is very important that you have both tests with the blood test first to obtain an accurate result.

This test is specifically designed to screen for Trisomy 21, Trisomy 13, and Trisomy 18. Other genetic abnormalities however, may be revealed after further investigating the test results. Remember some abnormalities are mild but some can be severe in nature.

If you are unsure whether you wish to have this screening test please discuss this with your GP or at your first hospital appointment prior to 13 weeks plus 6 days.

Understanding test results and options
If you do not understand your test results fully please discuss this at your next antenatal appointment.

As a guide when interpreting results, the higher the number the lower the likelihood that your baby will have Trisomy 21, 18 or 13. 1:250 or above means less chance, for example your result may say 1:1000. 1:250 or numbers lower than this are classed as a higher likelihood of baby having a chromosomal abnormality, for example 1:50. Options then include:
- Chorionic Villus Sampling (CVS) or Amniocentesis for a more definitive diagnosis;
- non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT);
- detailed ultrasound at 16-20 weeks;
- no action - parents may choose to accept the results with no further investigation.

If you require information about your options and the tests stated please ask to speak with one of our doctors who will be able to comprehensively explain what each test/result means. We also have a handout that is used in conjunction with a consultation explaining this information further. No tests will be done without informed consent and counseling from one of our obstetric doctors.

Please remember the majority of pregnancies with abnormal results will have a normal outcome. It is also important to note that not all abnormalities that might affect a baby can be identified before birth.

Second trimester screening for Down Syndrome and Spina Bifida
This is a blood test, that looks at your likelihood of having a baby with Down Syndrome. It can be done between 14 and 20 weeks plus 6 days if you were not able to do the first trimester screening. It also identifies if there is an increased chance of neural tube defect that is present in Spina Bifida.

Women who have a negative blood group
All women who are Rh Negative receive injections called “anti-D” at 28 weeks and 34 weeks. This prevents your body from making antibodies to your baby’s red cells. If you have a negative blood group (Rh Negative) it is important that you understand what this means for you and your baby. Please discuss it with your midwife or doctor.

It is very important you have your recommended 26 week blood tests including your blood group and red cell antibodies checked before your 28 week antenatal check. Anti D cannot be given until results from this test are available.

Diabetes in Pregnancy
It is recommended that all women have a test for diabetes in pregnancy (POGTT) attended at 26 weeks, this includes women who may have had this test early in pregnancy. Undiagnosed or uncontrolled diabetes may lead to:
- Bigger or smaller babies due to the placenta not functioning properly
- High blood sugar levels at birth for baby and sometimes breathing difficulties
- Higher risk of baby developing obesity or diabetes as an adult
• Mother has higher risk of developing pre-eclampsia or hypertension

Please note this is a fasting test for pregnant women which means no food including chewing gum and cigarettes for at least 8 hours prior and plain water only during the fasting period.


Blood tests at 26-28 weeks

At 26-28 weeks bloods are taken for diabetes (POGTT), haemaglobin and red cell antibodies and iron studies.

The results of these tests will be discussed with you at your 28 week visit and any recommendations/follow up made. It is therefore very important that you ensure these tests have been completed prior to your 28 week antenatal appointment.

Group B Streptococcus

At 36 weeks you will be weighed and asked to provide a specimen of urine. The midwife will also ask you to collect a vaginal swab. The swab is used to detect a bacteria called Group B Streptococcus (GBS). 15%-25% of the normal population carries this bacteria which is not harmful to you. However in 1%-2% of cases it can be passed onto the baby during the birth process, which can cause the baby to become ill with symptoms of sepsis.

THS policy recommends that you be treated with antibiotics (given into your vein) during labour if GBS is detected. This will help protect your baby from infection and reduce their risk to around 0.1%. All babies whose mothers are GBS positive are closely observed for signs of illness, particularly in the first 12 - 24 hours after birth. In some cases where antibiotics were not given in labour those babies will need to be observed for 48 hours.

Important decisions for the care of your baby after birth

Some consideration needs to be made antenatally about care options for your baby when it is born. This involves some research and iron studies.

It is important you read information about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and bed sharing. Because of the risk involved the THS recommends that you do not bed share with your baby.

Information on caring for your newborn and SIDS is further discussed more later in this booklet.

Hepatitis B Vaccination for the newborn

Hepatitis B is a virus that can cause acute or chronic liver disease. If a baby contracts this disease, symptoms fortunately may be mild for your baby. However, most babies will go on to be chronic carriers which can cause liver cancer later in life and also pass the virus onto others or their own children.

Hepatitis B is spread easily through body fluid secretion including blood (cuts or sores, body piercing, sharing toothbrushes, razors), saliva (kissing, baby dribbling), semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk.

Immunisation is considered the most effective way of preventing hepatitis B and if given at birth is more likely to provide life long immunity.

The THS offers vaccination to your baby prior to leaving the hospital. Your baby will need a further three more doses of the hepatitis B vaccine to be fully immunised. These three doses are given at six weeks, four and six months of age in a combination with other routine infant immunisations.

The vaccine is considered safe to give to your baby after birth. It is well tolerated and minor side effects may include local swelling and redness at injection site, mild fever and occasionally irritability or refusal of feeds for a short time. These symptoms are short lived.

Premature babies less than 32 weeks gestation may have a lower immune response to hepatitis B vaccine and may need a hepatitis B booster at 12 months of age. The vaccination should only be delayed if your baby is very unwell or has a high fever. Antibiotic treatment is not a reason to delay hepatitis B vaccination.

For further information visit Immunise Australia www.immunise.health.gov.au

Vitamin K

Vitamin K helps blood to clot. It is produced by the body and is essential to prevent rare but serious bleeding in the newborn. Some babies do not produce enough Vitamin K until they are a few months old. They do not get enough Vitamin K from their mothers during pregnancy and there is not sufficient Vitamin K for their needs in breastmilk or formula.

The Royal College of Paediatricians recommend that all babies be given the Vitamin K injection to prevent a now rare bleeding disorder called Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB). Prior to the implementation of routine injection of Vitamin K, some untreated babies who suffered from VKDB sustained brain damage or even died.

The injection is the most reliable way to provide enough Vitamin K to protect your baby for months until he/she can produce it themselves.

Alternatively Vitamin K can be given to babies orally. Because Vitamin K is not absorbed as well when given by mouth, your baby must have three doses over the course of four weeks. If your baby vomits within an hour of swallowing the Vitamin K, the baby will need to repeat the dose.

Limitations around giving vitamin K orally include premature or sick babies; mother’s who have a history of blood clots, epilepsy or tuberculosis.

Within Australia, Vitamin K has been administered to babies for over 50 years with no documented problems. Earlier studies suggested that injections of Vitamin K may be linked with childhood cancer. The National Health and Medical Research Council conclude from more recent studies that Vitamin K is not associated with childhood cancer, whether it is given by injection or by mouth.

In order to prevent the rare but potentially fatal disease (Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding), medical authorities strongly recommend that all babies be given Vitamin K. This includes babies who are premature or sick, and babies having any surgery (including circumcision).

We require your verbal consent to allow administration of Vitamin K. If you decline Vitamin K for your baby a paediatrician will see you in the postnatal period to ensure you are making an informed choice for your baby.
Your visits
Visits, tests and baby development

At 12 weeks the fetus is fully formed, from now on it has to grow and mature.

Please bring this book with you to your appointments and pack in your hospital bag.

Please note the schedule of visits outlined is in line with Australian standards but may vary depending on your assessed needs during your pregnancy.

Visits, tests and baby development

Between 7 and 10 weeks

Usually attended by GP

GP to provide referral to THS for pregnancy care.

Recommended tests for discussion:
- Blood Group, antibody screen;
- Full Blood Examination (FBE);
- Ferritin levels
- Rubella;
- HIV;
- Syphilis;
- Hep B and C;
- Vitamin D;
- early POGTT or blood test to check for diabetes in pregnancy if indicated; and
- Urine test (MSU) for asymptomatic bacteriuria.

Tests to be offered/discussed at this Visit:
- Serum screening (Down Syndrome Test) and scan;
- Dating scan and discuss 18 20 ultrasound scan that looks at fetal development and wellness;
- Height, weight to determine BMI.

Between 10 and 14 weeks

Attend first Midwife appointment

Discuss ultrasound and blood results
- Chlamydia Screening – 25 yrs & under.
- Early Glucose Test if indicated.
- Complete any unfinished tests.
- Book 18 20 week ultrasound to look at fetal development and wellness.
- Measure blood pressure (B/P), weight, check uterine size.
- Given a copy of the Maternity Information Package (this book) of which it is important to start reading as education is a continual process throughout your pregnancy.
- Orange folder provided to hold information obtained from visits and forms for all tests required in pregnancy including ultrasounds and blood tests.
- Offer to complete Edinburgh Perinatal Depression Screening (EPDS).
- Models of care and antenatal education options discussed.
- Screening assessment done for Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) risk category.
- Discuss FluVax and Pertussis booster.

Baby development

At 7 weeks the embryo has grown to about 10mm long from head to bottom. By 8 9 weeks, your baby has grown to 22mm, a face is forming, and the eyes are obvious. There are the beginnings of hands and feet. The major internal organs are all developing heart, brain, kidneys, liver and gut.

At 12 weeks the fetus is fully formed, from now on it has to grow and mature. The baby is already moving about but the movements cannot be felt yet. By 20 weeks the face is beginning to look more human and hair is starting to grow as well as eyebrows and eyelashes. Between 16 20 weeks you will feel your baby move for the first time, it will feel like fluttering or bubbling.
Between 16 and 20 weeks

Discuss ultrasound and blood results.
Attend ultrasound appointment.
Measure B/P, weight, check uterine size.
Listen for fetal heart and check for fetal movements.
Discuss fetal movements (pattern, strength, frequency & intuition)
Discuss the Glucose screening test, used to detect diabetes of pregnancy.
If not already done book Glucose Tolerance Test for around 26 weeks.
Ensure you have blood forms for pathology for FBE, antibodies, Glucose Tolerance Test (POGTT), due before 28 week visit.
Discuss Anti D for Rh Negative mothers for next visit.
Book birth and parenting, and breastfeeding classes.

At 24 and 28 weeks

Check and discuss any results.
Measure B/P, weight, check fetal heart beat, fetal movements, size and position of baby via abdominal palpation.
Discuss healthy lifestyle, emotional and social well being.
If 28 weeks and Rh Negative review the antibody screening blood test results and give Anti D injection.
Safe Sleeping and active third stage (delivery of placenta) to be discussed.
Commence breastfeeding education
Reminder about seasonal fuvax and getting Pertussis vaccination/booster between 28 and 32 weeks.
Discuss Mum setting to sleep on her side from 28 weeks. “Side to sleep for Mum & back to sleep for baby”

32 weeks

Measure B/P, weight, check fetal heart beat, fetal movements, size and position of baby via abdominal palpation.
Discuss healthy lifestyle, emotional and social well being.
Reminder of importance of fetal movements and use of PAC.
Considerations for birth, postnatal care and breastfeeding discussed.

Baby development

At about 22 weeks the baby becomes covered in a fine hair called ‘lanugo’, which usually disappears before birth.

Sometimes the baby may get hiccups, and you may feel the jerk of each hiccup. The baby may also begin to follow a pattern for waking and sleeping. At 24 weeks your baby is about 33cms long and is covered in a substance called vernix.

The baby is now moving about vigorously and responds to touch and to sound. A loud noise may make it jump and kick. It also swallows small amounts of the amniotic fluid and passes tiny amounts of urine back into the fluid. At 26 weeks the eyelids open for the first time. Your midwife/Dr can hear the baby’s heartbeat through a sonicade.

Your baby’s movements

Usually, an active baby is a healthy baby. Most women will start to feel their baby move between 16 - 22 weeks of their pregnancy. It is important that you get to know your baby’s routine, pattern and frequency of movements. Early movements will feel like a flutter or a tickle, only mum can feel these. As the baby gets bigger so do the movements. Between 20 - 35 weeks baby is getting stronger and you will feel kicks and punches. As baby grows there is less room but baby won’t slow down, rather the type of movement will differ, but regularity shouldn’t change. You may feel rolls or sweeping movements. You may see a hand or foot. If anything feels different to normal, let your doctor, midwife or maternity ward know.

Always remember that normal movements are a sign of a healthy baby through both pregnancy and labour. Babies do not move all the time, even when perfectly healthy they do have short periods of sleep and quiet times - you will get to know your baby’s pattern of movement. A reduction or a sudden increase in a baby’s movements can sometimes by an important warning sign that a baby is unwell. If you feel something has changed or you have a bad feeling then contact your doctor, midwife or maternity ward.

A good habit during pregnancy is to spend some quiet time each day being aware of your baby’s movements, learning your baby’s routine, pattern & frequency of movement so you know what is normal for YOUR baby. For further information go to www.stillaware.org
18  Your Visits

34 weeks

Measure B/P, weight, check fetal heart beat, fetal movements, size and position of baby via abdominal palpation.
Discuss healthy lifestyle, emotional and social well being.
Discuss Group B Streptococcus (GBS) screening.
If Rh negative discuss and give Anti D injection.
Consider options for birth and coping with pain.
Continue breastfeeding education.

38 weeks

Check Group B Streptococcus (GBS) result and discuss possibility of having intravenous (IV) antibiotics in labour if the result is positive.
Discuss healthy lifestyle, emotional and social well being.
Measure B/P, weight, check fetal heart beat, fetal movements, size and position of baby via abdominal palpation.
Discuss signs of labour.
Continue breastfeeding education.

36 weeks

Group B Streptococcus (GBS) screening swab collected, mid stream urine (MSU) collection and you will be weighed & have a blood test for Hb and Ferritin.
Discuss healthy lifestyle, emotional and social well being, & have a blood test for Hb and Ferritin.
Active management of the 3rd stage of labour should be discussed and your preference documented.
Importance of Safe Sleeping discussed.
Measure B/P, check fetal heart beat, fetal movements, size and position of baby via abdominal palpation.
Discuss consent for Hepatitis B and Vitamin K immunisation.
Continue breastfeeding education.

Baby development
Your baby is gaining weight so the skin that was quite wrinkled before is now smoother. Both the lanugo and the vernix begin to disappear. By 32 weeks your baby is usually lying head down.

40 weeks

Measure B/P, weight, check fetal heart beat, fetal movements, size and position of baby via abdominal palpation.
Discuss healthy lifestyle, emotional and social well being.
Possible vaginal examination and cervical sweep.
Discuss fetal monitoring, baby movements and CTG (monitoring baby’s heart beat) requirement at next appointment.
Discuss induction of labour.
Continue breastfeeding education.

41 weeks

Measure B/P weight, check fetal heart beat, fetal movements, size and position of baby via abdominal palpation.
Discuss healthy lifestyle, emotional and social well being.
Offer a vaginal examination, cervical sweep and gain indication of requirements for induction of labour.
CTG attended.
Induction of labour booking made and discussed (usually for around 41 weeks plus 2 days).

Post Term
Some women do not go into labour by themselves. It is safe to go over your due date providing you and your baby’s health are fine. You may be required to have more hospital visits to ensure this and be offered an induction of labour.

Baby development
At 36 weeks your baby may start to move down into the pelvis and may be in the ‘engaged’ position.
A healthy pregnancy
Health advice and choices

Your body will undergo many changes due to pregnancy hormones and your growing baby. Sometimes simple measures can help with these discomforts. These minor discomforts of pregnancy may include:

- Backache and groin pain;
- Indigestion/Heartburn;
- Constipation;
- Swelling;
- Varicose Veins;
- Muscle Cramps;
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome;
- Inability to sleep or vivid dreams;
- Shortness of breath; and
- Increased Vaginal Discharge.

Talk with your midwife, who may refer you to a physiotherapist, or make some practical suggestions to help ease the condition. Almost all of these conditions will rapidly improve after the birth of your baby.

Please view information on travel in pregnancy at www.ranzcog.edu.au, search ‘Travelling during Pregnancy’. It is very important to know that the law requires you to wear a seatbelt at all times during your pregnancy. The lap sash should be worn around your hips but under your pregnant belly, the shoulder strap should be above your belly and between your breasts.

Emotional changes during pregnancy

Along with the physical changes mentioned above some women experience emotional changes, you may feel sad and teary for what may appear to be no apparent reason. Hormones of pregnancy are likely to be the cause of these emotional changes, which can affect you and subsequently other members of your family. When booking into the hospital we will ask you to fill out a form that evaluates your emotional wellbeing. This assessment is called the Edinburgh Perinatal Depression Scale, and is completed antenatally and again after you have your baby by the Child Health and Parenting Service (CHAPS). Your score will be discussed with you at the time and depending on the EPDS score, referral may be offered to your G.P and the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Service. It is important to discuss your feelings during pregnancy with your partner, family, GP or other health professional.

Support both emotionally and physically is important during your pregnancy and following the birth of your baby. Try to arrange some support well before your due date. If you require further support speak with your Midwife or contact Beyond Blue at: www.beyondblue.org.au You could also ring Lifeline Australia on 1300 22 4636.

The transition to pregnancy, birth and early parenthood while rewarding it can also be a time of change. Depression and anxiety can happen at any time, but we know that women are more likely to be affected by depression and anxiety or stress during the perinatal period. To support our clients experiencing perinatal mental health concerns, a referral is available to the social work services or your GP for ongoing specialised care. Please also refer to the Beyondblue booklet ‘A guide to emotional health and wellbeing during pregnancy and early parenthood’ that can be downloaded from their website www.beyondblue.org.au. It is also recognised that pregnancy and parenting can bring new challenges for all family members, including dads and partners. The PANDA (Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia) national helpline is available 10am till 5pm eastern standard time on 1300 726 306 or there is a lot of invaluable information at www.panda.org.au or www.cope.org.au

Exercise

It is important to remain active during your pregnancy. Activities like walking, swimming, supervised pregnancy pilates and yoga are all fine to continue whilst pregnant. Being active can help with weight management, build stamina, muscle strength, improve circulation, and assist your body in preparation for your labour. It is important to remember that normal exercise should not cause pain and overheating during pregnancy can be harmful for your unborn baby. Drink plenty of water during and after exercise.

Braxton Hicks Contractions

These are painless and harmless tightenings of your uterus. They are not labour contractions and are common from 20 weeks onwards. If you are experiencing lots of braxton hicks contractions things you can do to try alleviating them are; ensure you are well hydrated, change positions or lie down on your left side, and ensure you have emptied your bladder recently. If you are concerned that your contractions are more than braxton hicks please contact your Midwife.

Why attend scheduled Antenatal visits if I feel well?

Antenatal care allows us to monitor your health and emotional well being and the baby’s health and growth. Most pregnancies progress well but some problems are symptom less and not easily recognised by the pregnant women. This may include a slowing in the baby’s growth or a rise in your blood pressure.

Sex during pregnancy

If you are experiencing a normal healthy pregnancy and you want to continue to enjoy sex there is no reason not to. It will not harm you or your baby. Talk with your midwife, doctor or Birth Suite if spotting occurs during or after intercourse (this can be normal), as any bleeding in pregnancy needs reviewing.

Sexual intercourse is not advised in some pregnancies including if there is heavy bleeding, you’ve had previous miscarriages or your waters are broken.
Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)
It is a known fact that some STI's can be harmful to fertility, the unborn baby, cause premature births and infections in some newborns. Whilst some testing is done antenatally please discuss any concerns with your doctor/midwife.
You can also access further information at www.healthdirect.gov.au

Fasting
The THS WACS understand that for some clients fasting may be required during pregnancy or whilst breastfeeding due to religious or other reasons. To help you make an informed choice about fasting, please discuss this at your antenatal visits and ask for any further literature that may be available.

Traditional Cutting/Female Circumcision
Your midwife or doctor may ask you about traditional cutting/female circumcision if you are from a cultural background where this is traditional practice. If you have experienced traditional cutting/female circumcision in any form it is important you see a doctor at some time during your antenatal care to discuss any special requirements for the birth of your baby.
Awareness of the circumstances before your baby’s birth is very important as it allows discussion of any needs and postnatal expectations.

Dental care
The hormonal changes that occur during pregnancy can lead to dental problems such as tooth decay and gingivitis (where gums become red and bleed easily).
Twice daily dental care is important whilst pregnant. If you make a dental appointment during pregnancy, x-rays or local anaesthetic may be required, so be sure to let your dentist know that you are pregnant. The increased incidence of gum disease or bacterial infection of the gums has been shown to be associated with low birth weight and premature infants.

Venous Thromboembolism (VTE)
VTE is defined as a condition in which a blood clot develops within the deep veins of the leg. VTE may lead to the blood clot breaking free and entering the blood circulation causing potential blood vessel obstruction to important organs such as the lungs. As blood clots can restrict blood flow, they can potentially lead to lifelong complications or fatality. Fortunately VTE can be prevented and if diagnosed effective treatment can be implemented.
Symptoms may include:
• Redness or warmth in one spot on the leg
• Pain and swelling in one leg
• If the clot has reached the lungs, shortness of breath or chest pain may occur
VTE does not always have symptoms, which is why it is important to understand the risk factors. Due to the hormonal changes pregnancy places women at an increased risk of developing a VTE. This combined with other conditions like obesity, elevated blood pressure, smoking or caesarean birth may further increase the risk of VTE.
The THS WACS have implemented into the booking in visit a screening tool to help determine if you are at risk of a VTE and to allow for appropriate management if the risk is identified. We ask all pregnant women to be mindful of the symptoms and report to staff if concerned. For more information go to www.healthdirect.gov.au/deep-vein-thrombosis.

Travel Advice
If you are intending on travelling within Australia and to foreign countries you should consult your doctor or midwife for advice about continuing pregnancy care and travel health. See also advice on VTE within this booklet.
RANZCOG have advice for Travelling when Pregnant Booklet

Natural or alternative remedies
Natural or alternative remedies may also be drugs. To safeguard you and your baby, both through your pregnancy and afterwards, do not take any alternative remedies unless directed by your doctor or an accredited therapist. Midwives do not have the expertise to endorse or educate you in these matters.

Vaccination Advice
Influenza (Flu)
Under the National Immunisation Program all pregnant women are eligible to receive a free flu vaccine every year. It is safe to have the flu vaccine at any stage during pregnancy or when breastfeeding.
Influenza vaccination in pregnant women may protect them, and their unborn child, from the risk of severe illness and hospitalisation resulting from some strains of the flu.

Whooping Cough (Pertussis)
Whooping cough is an extremely contagious respiratory infection caused by the bacteria Bordetella pertussis which gives violent coughing spasms up to 100 days or more. This can cause sleep disturbances, vomiting, rib fractures, pneumonia and in rare cases fatality in adults. For the first six weeks of a newborns life they have no immunity against whooping cough which if contracted can cause serious complications like pneumonia and fatality for babies under twelve months of age.
The recommendation is that it is safe for pregnant women to receive the Pertussis Vaccine in every pregnancy after 28 weeks gestation and if given prior to 32 weeks full benefit to the unborn baby is more likely. Please check the recommendations for other family members on the website below.
For more information on immunisations against childhood diseases, visit your local doctor or immunisation provider or go to www.immunise.health.gov.au
Diet and pregnancy

Pregnancy brings with it enormous changes in your body and because of the growing baby you need to eat a healthy diet. Healthy weight gain is important and a guide to this is given in the box below.

Women who do not gain enough weight have a risk of premature birth. Women who are overweight or gain too much weight during pregnancy have a higher risk of:

• high blood pressure;
• gestational diabetes;
• Caesarean birth; and
• difficulty losing weight after the birth.

The THS WACS strongly believe in open disclosure and your right to be fully informed. To ensure this woman with a BMI above 35 will additionally be provided with (or upon request) the RANZCOG ‘Weight Management during Pregnancy’ guide which provides further information relevant to BMI.

Five food groups

Eat a variety of different foods from the essential food groups every day to get all the vitamins and minerals you and your baby need. The essential food groups for your health and baby’s growth and development are:

1. Vegetables, legumes, and some fruit;
2. Grains;
3. Milk, yoghurt, cheese and dairy alternatives;
4. Lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts and seeds;
5. Healthy fats, herbs and spices.

Water intake of more than two litres daily is recommended. Limit salt and sugar whilst pregnant and breastfeeding to allow for steady baby growth and development.


Folate (or folic acid)

Folate is needed for the growth and development of your baby. A good source of folate can be found in green leafy vegetables, broccoli, oranges and fortified fruit juice, bread and breakfast cereal. It is recommended that women planning pregnancy take a folic acid supplement of 400 micrograms per day at least one month before pregnancy and 600 micrograms plus for three months after becoming pregnant to reduce the risk of their baby having a neural tube defect such as spina bifida.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps the body to absorb calcium from food to provide you with healthy bones and muscles. Your body will produce vitamin D when your skin is exposed to the UV light in sunlight. The amount of vitamin D your body makes depends on skin type, exposure time, amount of skin exposed, UV levels, lifestyle and health. It is good to spend time in the sun and sensible sun protection (sunscreen, hat and glasses) does not put people at risk of vitamin D deficiency. Women more at risk of Vitamin D deficiency:

• Have dark skin;
• Cover most of their body with clothing; and
• Spend most of their time indoors.

Speak to your doctor if you have any concerns or for further information on Vitamin D in Tasmania go to www.dhhs.tas.gov.au and search this topic.

It is safe to take vitamin D supplements during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Calcium

Have four serves of calcium rich food every day to help your baby grow strong bones and teeth. Dairy foods or calcium fortified dairy alternatives, e.g. soy or rice milk and tinned fish are the best sources of calcium. If you don’t eat these foods you may need a calcium supplement.

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BMI and recommended weight gain for single pregnancy • RANZCOG Guidelines

First trimester (3 months)

One to two kilograms in the first three months of pregnancy.

Second and third trimesters

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<th>You should gain:</th>
<th>Recommended total gain range (kg)</th>
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<td>Less than 18.5kg/m²</td>
<td>500g/week</td>
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<td>400g/week</td>
<td>11.5-16</td>
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<td>25 to 29.9kg/m²</td>
<td>Less than 300g/week</td>
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<td>Above 30kg/m²</td>
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If your pre pregnancy BMI was:

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<td>25 to 29.9kg/m²</td>
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Recommended weight gain for twins or triplet pregnancy

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<th>If your pre pregnancy BMI was:</th>
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Iron
Iron is needed to form red blood cells for you and your baby. It helps carry oxygen in your blood and is needed for your baby to grow.

During pregnancy your iron requirements are increased. A lack of iron can often leave you anaemic, tired and less able to fight off infection. The best sources of iron are lean meats, green leafy vegetables, legumes and fortified cereals. Citrus fruits and other foods high in Vitamin C will help the iron from your food to be well absorbed.

Your iron levels may be tested in your pregnancy especially if your hemoglobin is found to be low. It is safe to take iron supplements during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Talk to your midwife or doctor to discuss the best supplements for you.

Eating fish during pregnancy
Fish is a safe and important part of healthy eating. It is important to eat fish when you are pregnant but you need to be careful about the fish you choose. Some fish may accumulate mercury which may be harmful to your baby’s developing nervous system.

For more information regarding Mercury levels in fish go to: www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumerinformation/mercuryinfish.cfm

Iodine for pregnancy and breastfeeding
Adequate iodine in pregnancy and breastfeeding is essential for the normal development of baby’s brain and nervous system. It is recommended that all women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or considering pregnancy take an iodine supplement of 150 micrograms each day. You need to include good sources of iodine in addition to this supplement. These include: seafood, eggs, iodised salt and bread with added iodine. Women with pre-existing thyroid conditions should seek advice from their medical practitioners prior to taking a supplement.

Ask your midwife or obstetrician for more information regarding iodine. or go to www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/new45 or www.foodstandards.gov.au

Food safety and hygiene

Toxoplasmosis
Humans can be infected with toxoplasmosis through being in contact with the faeces of infected animals (commonly cats), eating undercooked or raw meat, consuming unpasturised milk and contaminated vegetables.

Toxoplasmosis can reach the baby of an infected mother through the placenta and cause them to become very unwell. For further information search toxoplasmosis at better health vic.

To reduce the risk of Toxoplasmosis:
• Wash hands well after gardening or handling pets;
• Wash salad and vegetables well;
• Cook meat well;
• Wear gloves when disposing of cat litter; avoid contact with animal faeces where possible.

Listeria
Is a bacteria that is not common but can cause a serious illness called listeriosis in some people. Pregnant women, their unborn and newborn children are at a higher risk of becoming unwell if they get listeriosis.

It can cause miscarriage, premature labour, babies being unwell at birth and stillbirths. Some foods are more prone to contamination. Listeriosis can be treated with antibiotics but prevention is best. For further information please search listeria on www.foodstandards.gov.au

To reduce the risk of Listeria:
• Thoroughly wash your hands, cooking utensils and chopping boards.
• Make sure hot foods are hot (above 60 degrees) and cold foods are cold (below 5 degrees) both at home and when eating out.
• Cook all meat, chicken, fish and eggs thoroughly.
• Avoid certain high risk foods, e.g. soft cheeses, cold cooked chicken, cold sliced meats, uncooked or smoked seafood, pre-prepared salads such as coleslaw, pate and soft serve ice cream.
• Wash raw vegetables and fruit well before consuming.
• Ideally, eat only freshly cooked food and well-washed freshly prepared fruit and vegetables. However, leftovers can be eaten if they are refrigerated promptly and kept no longer than a day. It is important you do not eat food if there is any doubt about its hygienic preparation or storage.

Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
A pregnant woman infected with CMV can pass the virus to her baby during pregnancy.

Most babies born with CMV infection will be fine, however some may develop health problems.

CMV is transmitted through urine & saliva. If you’re pregnant, the best way to protect your baby from CMV is to protect yourself.

• Wash your hands often with soap and water especially after changing a nappy; feeding, wiping a child’s nose or mouth, and touching their toys, pacifier, or other objects.
• Don’t share food, drinks, eating utensils, or a toothbrush with a child.
• Do not put a child’s pacifier in your mouth.
• Use soap and water or a disinfectant to clean toys, counter-tops, and other surfaces that may have a child’s saliva or urine on them.
• Avoid contact with saliva when kissing or snuggling.

For more information see www.cmv.org.au

Eating nutritious meals is one of the best things you can do for your baby’s health whilst pregnant.

For further information go to: www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/healthy-diet-during-pregnancy
Alcohol in Pregnancy

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can harm the brain and body of an unborn child and increase the risk of miscarriage, low birth weight or premature birth. This can also mean underdeveloped organs within your baby. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a term used to describe conditions caused by harmful effects of alcohol exposure on the unborn child. Most children with FASD do not look different but may have varying levels of brain damage, emotional and physical development delays, learning problems and behavioral disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD).

Frequently asked questions about alcohol in pregnancy

- Can Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) be cured?
  The brain damage caused by alcohol is permanent and lifelong.
- Will a little bit of alcohol be a risk?
  Yes. It is therefore wise to have no alcohol if you are planning a pregnancy or are pregnant.
- What if I drank alcohol before I knew I was pregnant?
  Many women are unaware they are pregnant until the 5th or 6th week. If alcohol was used at this time, don’t panic. The best action is to stop drinking.
  For more information telephone the Drug Education Network Inc. local call: 1300 369 319 or www.den.org.au
  Alcohol and Other Drug Information Service: 1800 811 994

Smoking in pregnancy

There are many health risks associated with tobacco for both you and your baby. Smoking increases your risk of having a miscarriage, a premature birth or a stillbirth. Babies whose mothers smoke tend to be small for their age which can also mean poorly developed organs and frequently have breathing problems.

Your midwife will ask you about your smoking and alcohol use with each of your visits & can help with strategies to cut down & stop.

Use of drugs in pregnancy

There is no safe level of illicit drug use in pregnancy and some prescribed and legal medications can also be harmful to the unborn or breastfeeding baby including complimentary medicines. Many drugs can cross the placenta and harm your child. In Australia medications are classified into risk categories so it is important that you tell medical or midwifery staff if you are taking any kind of drugs (including over the counter) drinking alcohol or smoking.

It can also be dangerous if a woman who needs medication stops taking it so get advice prior to any changes.

Babies whose mothers use drugs and alcohol during their pregnancy may have lower intelligence and behavioural problems. These babies often go through withdrawal symptoms and may need to go to the Neonatal Paediatric Intensive Care Unit or Special Care Unit. There is also a risk of stillbirth or premature birth. A premature birth means your baby may not be well developed and have a low birth weight which tends to lead to them being more prone to childhood illnesses. For help/information contact:

- Quitline – 13 78 48  www.quittas.org.au
- Alcohol & Drug Service – 1300 139 641 or www.den.org.au (24hr Help 1800 811 994)
Labour and birth
Remember

Baby grows very quickly so it is good advice not to buy too many very small items of clothing.

What you will need to bring into hospital

For mother

- Loose and lightweight clothing for labour;
- Comfortable day clothes and footwear;
- Comfortable sleepwear;
- Nursing bras and pads;
- Sanitary pads;
- Medicare Card and Private Health Insurance Card;
- Hand held record (orange folder);
- Energy rich food for labour like bananas, grapes, barley sugar, cheese, yoghurt;
- Tea, coffee if required between meals;
- Massage Oil with no added scents;
- Watch or clock;
- Music in CD or iDOC form for labour;
- battery charged ‘tea light’ candles are permitted only;
- Camera; and
- Mobile phones but should not be used in areas where they might interfere with electronic equipment, if unsure please ask the staff. Mobile phone use should be restricted in double rooms turn off overnight.

For baby

- 4-6 grow suits, either size 0000 or 000;
- 4-6 singlets;
- 4-6 light weight wraps;
- Nappies, pack of 32, newborn size;
- 2 Light weight blankets;
- Socks/Mittens;
- Hat for discharge;
- Nappy changing gear - face washers, baby wipes, cotton balls;
- Cloth nappies or hand towel for ‘spill’ cloth; and
- Tin of formula if artifically feeding.

Partners need to bring what they may require over 24 - 48 hours including all snacks (meals not provided for partners).

Please pack this book

Do not bring large amounts of money or valuables. (You may be asked to complete a valuables disclaimer when you present to the hospital).

What you will need for your baby at home

At minimum you will require a safe sleep environment for baby (cot or bassinet), approved rearward facing car seat and possibly a pram. Optionally you may like to purchase a baby bath and some type of baby rocker or play mat. Remember the only unsupervised safe sleep environment for baby is their cot/bassinet.

When buying second hand equipment make sure they are safe for baby, with recommended 5 point harness for car seats, prams and high chairs. For further information on Australian standards go to www.productsafety.gov.au/products/babies-kids

If you are formula feeding your baby, you will need sterilising equipment, bottles, caps and teats.
Labour and birth

Your birthing preferences

Preparation for your birth is important and some women decide to write down their birthing preferences which allows them the opportunity to share thoughts and special needs with the midwife/doctor and support people. It is important that you provide your midwife/doctor with a copy of your birth plan prior to your labour to allow an informed discussion to take place. The midwives will always try to fulﬁl your wishes provided that it is safe for you and your baby.

Some things to think about during your pregnancy, and possibly discuss with your midwife and doctor are:

• Your chosen support team (2 people only);
• Positions for labour and birthing;
• What you will bring with you to personalise your environment;
• Your chosen methods of pain relief; and
• Your preferences if there are complications.

Labour has three stages:

Labour is simply the muscles of your uterus contracting to thin and open your cervix (the lower part of the uterine muscle) and to help move baby down further into the pelvis. Oxytocin is your natural hormone that works to allow this to happen.

• First stage is from the beginning of regular contractions until the cervix is fully open (10cm);
• Second stage is when the cervix is fully open until your baby is born. This is commonly called the pushing stage, although not all women feel the urge to push. If you do not feel the urge your body will usually do it involuntarily with contractions anyway. Women usually feel bowel pressure and a burning and stinging sensation around their vagina during this stage. This is normal and means your baby will be born soon; and
• Third stage is from the birth of your baby until the birth of the placenta.

How long is labour and how might I feel?

Labour and birth is unique for every woman. This can mean lots of variation in the length of each labour and feelings you may experience.

In the weeks leading up to your labour, it is very normal to experience varying emotions and body changes including increased vaginal discharge, increased Braxton hicks, feelings of anxiousness or excitement and other common discomforts like back or hip pain or the occasional sharp pain within the cervix region, as the body and mind prepare for labour.

The early phase of your first stage is when the contractions are often irregular around 5 to 20 minutes apart lasting 20 to 40 seconds and may range from approximately 8 to 16 hours. During this time your cervix is starting to change, thinning out and dilating to 3–4 cm. You may also notice a mucous plug referred to as a show (clear or white thick mucous often streaked with blood) or your ‘waters’ break; backache or diarrhea which are all normal signs of early labour. Remember though you do not have to have ruptured membranes to be in labour, this can happen at any stage.

Once the contractions become stronger, more regular and painful you are in a more active part of your labour. This is still a part of the ﬁrst stage of labour, your cervix is dilating from 4 to 8cm, the contractions are around 3 to 7 minutes apart and lasting up to 60 seconds. This active phase may take around 3-5 hours. Many women present to hospital during this part of labour. During this phase your feelings need all your attention. Remember in between each contraction your body is able to relax and regain focus.

Transition is part of ﬁrst stage of labour where your body is working really hard for approximately 1-2 hours. Contractions may be 2-3 minutes apart lasting 60 to 90 seconds and your cervix dilates to 10 cm. Common feelings include pressure in the bowels, nausea, irritability or panic, a heavy vaginal show (thick mucous combined with blood) and spontaneous rupture of membranes if this has not occurred earlier. These feelings are a good sign your body is progressing well towards meeting your baby.

Stage two, the pushing phase to the birth of your baby, begins when your cervix is 10cm and fully thinned out, plus the baby has moved further down into your pelvis. Pushing for some women may only take 15 minutes but for other women it could be up to 2 hours. Strong, regular contractions continue during this phase.

Please remember this is only a guide, each labour is different. For more information please refer to www.raisingchildren.net.au pregnancy information or consider attending one of our antenatal education sessions.

Delivery of the Placenta (third stage)

During the delivery of the placenta and soon after, new mothers are at their greatest risk of abnormal heavy bleeding (known as haemorrhage). With modern medicine the incidence of haemorrhage can be prevented or treated using oxytocin drugs to help the uterus (womb) contract and stop the bleeding, thereby reducing the risk of heavy bleeding.

How do you know you are in labour?

You are unlikely to mistake the signs of labour when the time really comes, but if you’re in any doubt don’t hesitate to contact your Midwife, PAC or Birth Suite and ask for advice. Labour patterns are different for all women. You are likely to be in labour when your contractions are regular (between 3 7 minutes apart) and cause strong period like pain or back ache and last more than 45 seconds.

You time from the start of one contraction to the start of the next contraction and they do need to be strong, regular and painful. Remember normal labour is painful but many women cope well. You do not have to have ruptured membranes (waters) to be in labour.
Evidence from clinical studies demonstrates that active management (administration of oxytocin drug) of third stage is more effective than natural (physiological) management in reducing the risk of heavy bleeding immediately after birth. For this reason, active management is considered the best and safest practice around the world and is routinely practised in hospitals within Australia.

All THS services have a policy to actively manage third stage with your consent. With consent (obtained during your antenatal visits) you will be given oxytocin with the birth of your baby, a drug similar to the body’s natural hormone, which causes the uterus to contract and separate the placenta from the uterus soon after the birth of your baby. Following the injection of oxytocin, the umbilical cord is usually clamped within 2-3 minutes and to assist the placenta to be delivered, the midwife or doctor will create tension on the cord whilst also applying gentle pressure on your stomach just above your pubic bone. Side effects such as mild nausea or a temporary increased blood pressure from the oxytocin drug are minimal when considering the risk of haemorrhage is significantly reduced.

Please understand that if you choose to have a physiological third stage (i.e. no injection of oxytocin unless heavy bleeding occurs), the THS will respect your decision but recommend that you discuss this at an antenatal visit to ensure your decision is fully informed.

Tear/Episiotomy and Stitches
During your baby’s birth a tear to the vaginal opening (perineum) sometimes happens. The doctor/midwife will repair the area with stitches within an hour after the birth. Local anaesthetic is used to help numb the area so it doesn’t hurt.

Episiotomy is a cut in the side of the vaginal opening - usually the right side. It is not routinely done but may be necessary depending on the circumstances to assist in the birth of your baby. After the birth the vaginal trauma will be assessed and sutured as required. Local anaesthetic is used in the area if suturing is needed.

Both tears and episiotomies usually heal quickly and the stitches will dissolve.

Care of stitches
- Ensure that you take some pain relief;
- Stool softeners may be required to decrease pressure on the stitches when opening your bowels;
- Keep the area clean and dry;
- Apply ice pack supplied by the hospital every three hours for 20 - 30 minutes in the first 24 hours, this helps with swelling and pain;
- If you have problems with wound healing or infection after giving birth talk with your midwife or see your GP; and
- For women who have sustained a 3rd or 4th degree tear to their perineum, a physiotherapist will see you following the birth and you will also have an appointment to return to the Gynaecology Clinic in about 6 weeks from the birth.

Monitoring your baby during labour
When you come to the hospital in labour there are some routine checks that the midwife or doctor will usually do. These may include:
- Regular check of your blood pressure, temperature and pulse;
- Check of your baby’s heart rate;
- Palpation of your abdomen to feel the position of your baby;
- On admission a monitor (CTG) may be used to record your baby’s heart rate and your contractions, and in certain circumstances may be required continuously throughout the labour process. In some circumstances when the quality of the external monitoring is poor, internal monitoring may be required. This involves attachment of a small probe via the vaginal passage and on to your baby’s head; and
- An ‘internal’ or vaginal examination will need to be done at regular intervals to check the progress of your labour. This is to feel how open and thin your cervix is and the position of your baby in the pelvis. A vaginal examination is the only way we are able to accurately determine your progress through labour.

For women with a high Body Mass Index (BMI) score your labour and birth may be considered at an increased risk. Please discuss this in your antenatal visits. If your labour is classified as higher risk the THS WACS recommends continuous fetal monitoring and increased observations of the mother be implemented during labour.

Pain and labour
It is normal for women to feel pain in labour and everyone experiences this pain differently. Some women say they have very little pain whilst others say it is the strongest they have ever felt.

You will feel each contraction reach a peak (like a hill or wave) but then it will recede or lessen and there will be no pain until the next contraction.

Each woman labours differently and how you cope with labour depends upon a lot of different factors. It is important not to compare yourself and how you labour to other women. The most important thing is how you feel.

What you can do for yourself
Research indicates that many women cope with labour by having a good understanding of the process and feeling well supported. Various hormones and beta-endorphins in your body are superbly designed to help you during labour and birth. To allow your body the best chance possible of labouring effectively and releasing natural pain relief
to its full potential it is important that you trust your body and try to create a calm, undisturbed environment. Simple and effective ways of helping you include:

- Understanding what is happening to your body; be positive and ask questions if you feel "out of control”;
- Knowing that you are in a safe environment and the staff will respect your needs and support you;
- Having a support person with you with whom you feel comfortable and confident;
- Relaxation and slow breathing that concentrates on the ‘out’ breath;
- Heat packs (are provided by the hospital, wheat packs or hot water bottles are not allowed in hospital);
- Choosing to make a noise or be silent;
- Massage;
- Moving and varying positions, find the position that is comfortable for you;
- Music or an object to help you focus your mind; and
- Showers/baths.

It is important to have an idea of what you think may work for you when establishing your labour at home. The suggestions provided can be useful at home and in hospital. Remember normal labour is painful but many women do find coping strategies that help them through the pain and reduce the need for medical pain relief options.

Please Note: You cannot bring flammable items such as incense burners or candles into THS hospitals.

External Cephalic Version (ECV)

In the last few weeks of pregnancy, most babies are head down in their mother’s uterus and this is the easiest and safest position for birth. ECV is a procedure performed by an Obstetrician which the THS WACS may be able to offer to turn a baby from a breech (bottom/foot first) to a cephalic (head first) presentation. The obstetrician will discuss the procedure with you and will need to obtain your consent to perform. For more information go to www.ranzcog.edu.au and search for the patient information pamphlet ‘Breech Presentation at the End of your Pregnancy’.

Prolonged pregnancy

Most women will go into labour naturally between 37 and 42 weeks.

If your pregnancy has gone more than one week overdue it is considered to be prolonged. Approximately 10% of all pregnancies are prolonged, the majority of these being ‘first time’ expecting mothers. We know from the research that spontaneous labour allows for the best possible outcome emotionally and physically for the woman, her family and her baby. However, we need to balance this with the understanding that closer to the 42 weeks gestation, a very small percentage of prolonged pregnancies may lead to potential risk to the wellbeing of the baby. The THS policy is that if your pregnancy is normal but is clearly overdue by 6-8 days AND you wish to have labour induced, we recommend the following:

- Understanding what is happening to your body; be positive and ask questions if you feel “out of control”;
- Knowing that you are in a safe environment and the staff will respect your needs and support you;
- Having a support person with you with whom you feel comfortable and confident;
- Relaxation and slow breathing that concentrates on the ‘out’ breath;
- Heat packs (are provided by the hospital, wheat packs or hot water bottles are not allowed in hospital);
- Choosing to make a noise or be silent;
- Massage;
- Moving and varying positions, find the position that is comfortable for you;
- Music or an object to help you focus your mind; and
- Showers/baths.

It is important to have an idea of what you think may work for you when establishing your labour at home. The suggestions provided can be useful at home and in hospital. Remember normal labour is painful but many women do find coping strategies that help them through the pain and reduce the need for medical pain relief options.

Please Note: You cannot bring flammable items such as incense burners or candles into THS hospitals.

Remember

Induction of labour

Sometimes labour needs to be started artificially. This is called induction. This is only done if the health of the mother and baby is of concern.

Some reasons for having an induction may be:

- Being overdue (usually 10 days);
- Having a medical problem, eg. high blood pressure, diabetes, bleeding; and
- Baby is stressed or not growing well.
IOL may progress differently to spontaneous labour. These changes can include:

- Preparing the cervix for labour may take some time, even a few days, to be effective. For this reason the decision for caesarean birth may occur if mother or baby are not well enough for IOL.
- Once the waters are broken labour may take some time to begin or may not establish.
- There is a slightly higher risk that your baby may show signs of distress and require an assisted birth or caesarean section to be born safely.
- Intermittent monitoring whilst preparing the cervix and then continuous electronic monitoring (CTG) of baby is required once in established labour to ensure your baby is coping well with the changing environment.
- You may require pain relief to help you manage labour.

There are other reasons why labour may need to be induced, and your doctor or midwife will explain these to you so you can participate in the decision.

There are several methods used to induce or begin a labour. The choice of this depends on a medical assessment by the doctor or midwife.

Induction of labour often needs to be carried out in two phases. The first phase is called cervical ripening, where the cervix (neck of the uterus) is encouraged to soften, shorten and open slowly to prepare for labour. This is called effacement of the cervix.

Cervical ripening can be encouraged by placing a hormone called prostaglandin near the cervix during an internal examination, given in the form of a slow release pessary or a gel to help soften the cervix. The prostaglandin pessary is left in place for 12 hours; the prostaglandin gel is absorbed slowly into the area and may require 2-3 doses over a day or two before induction is possible.

Another way to encourage cervical ripening is by placing pressure on the cervix. A thin rubber tube called a balloon catheter is inserted through the cervix. The catheter has two balloons at the tip that can be filled with water. When inflated these balloons put pressure on the cervix stretching it and encouraging it to release natural prostaglandin which leads to softening and shortening.

Balloon catheter in place

Cervical ripening methods may take several days to be fully effective, and in some cases more than one method is used.

The second phase occurs after the cervix has softened and is the labour phase. Labour may have commenced with the use of the prostaglandin hormone which may bring on contractions or by breaking the forewaters (artificial rupture of membranes or ARM) which typically occurs the following morning once the cervix is ripe.

If you do not begin to have strong, regular contractions (3-4 contractions in 10 minutes, lasting 45-60 seconds), an oxytocin infusion (hormone drip) will be started to encourage contractions to begin. The oxytocin infusion often needs to continue throughout labour and birth to allow for the contractions to continue.

What will happen when I arrive at the hospital?

You will be directed by your Doctor or Midwife as to when & where to present.

You will initially be admitted into a shared room until labour has begun. This means that your partner will not be able to stay with you overnight. When labour is establishing and you are moved to a birthing room your partner/support people will be able to remain with you until your baby is born.

If labour begins to establish during the night, we will contact your support person and ask them to return to the hospital.

An intravenous cannula (IV) may be placed into your hand or arm and a blood test will be taken to check your haemoglobin (iron) levels, this is part of routine care for women having an induction of labour to ensure safe care is provided.

When medical staff are available, the prostaglandin or balloon procedure will take place, and your baby’s heart rate will be monitored for a short time to make sure you are both well.

You will need to remain in hospital, but are encouraged to walk around to assist labour to begin. Even though you are experiencing an induction of labour remember an active labour has been shown to improve time frames and reduce pain levels and further intervention. Your cervix will be re-assessed later depending on which method of induction has been chosen. If your cervix has not changed enough to allow your waters to be broken, more gel or another balloon may be required.

Your midwife will check on you and your baby regularly over this time.

Our aim is to start your induction in a timely manner. The Maternity Unit is a busy workplace with unexpected admissions and fluctuations in the number of women presenting in spontaneous labour. Unfortunately sometimes we may need to delay or postpone your induction to ensure all our women are cared for in a safe environment. If you have any questions or concerns please contact the clinic or Maternity Unit on phone numbers provided in the front of this booklet. If you have any questions or concerns after admission, please ask your midwife or doctor.
Assisted births

In some births assistance may be required to allow your baby to be born vaginally. Whether you have a Ventouse or obstetric forceps depends on the circumstances of your labour and the individual needs of the labouring woman.

Ventouse (suction cup)

This may be used to assist in the birth of your baby if labour is not progressing with pushing. Reasons may include that the mother is too exhausted to push effectively, or if your baby is showing signs of fatigue and needs to be born quickly. The cup is made of plastic and has a hand pump. It is carefully positioned by the doctor and placed onto your baby’s head; the suction is applied, which allows for gentle traction when the mother is pushing. Your baby will have a swelling on the head immediately after birth which will begin to reduce over the following 24 hours.

Sometimes there is bruising on the head which will recede within about 10 days following the birth. An episiotomy is not always necessary with a birth assisted with a Ventouse however the decision to use episiotomy to assist the birth is decided following evaluation of each individual woman.

Forceps

Forceps are special instruments placed around your baby’s head inside the vagina to help guide your baby out during the pushing or second stage. They are used if there is delay in the second stage, your baby is in a difficult position, or there are concerns for your baby’s well-being. An episiotomy (small cut) in the perineum may be required to assist the birth of your baby’s head.

Vaginal birth after caesarean section (VBAC)

For many women it is safe practice to have a vaginal birth after having had a previous caesarean birth. It is important you discuss your options and wishes with your doctor or midwife as this information does not cover all the known facts about VBAC or all rare but possible complications that can occur as a result of VBAC. Everyone has different circumstances and personal requirements that need to be considered.

Many women who have had a caesarean section can have a vaginal birth in subsequent pregnancies. There is a small risk of problems with previous caesarean scars and you will therefore be monitored closely. Your doctor and/or midwife will discuss which conditions or precautions are necessary for you.

In some cases a repeat caesarean section will be recommended for certain medical or obstetric reasons. It is important that you discuss all your options with your health care team. Write down any questions you have and your doctor/midwife will be pleased to answer them.

What does the research say?

Caesarean section is a common operation with reported rates varying across the world. Australia’s reported rate is 23% of all births. Women considering their birthing options should understand that, overall the chances of a successful planned VBAC are 60-80% (RANZCOG, 2010) and 90% for those who have had a subsequent normal vaginal delivery following a caesarean section (RANZCOG, 2007).

Benefits of a successful VBAC include:

- less risk of the baby having breathing problems and being admitted into the nursery;
- reduced complications associated with major abdominal surgery;
- improved chance of early physical contact with baby and initiating breast feeding;
- enhanced ability to care for baby more effectively after delivery;
- some women experience a high level of satisfaction after a vaginal birth; and
- reduced risk of future placental problems from repeat caesarean section.

When all the risks of labour are considered VBAC results in fewer complications for most women than routine, repeat caesarean sections.

When is a VBAC not advisable?

- After a previous vertical/classical caesarean section birth where the uterine incision has involved the upper segment of the uterus.
- After some uterine surgery.
- After a previous uterine tear or rupture.
- Because of a maternal or fetal reason for an elective caesarean section.
- If the baby remains in a breech presentation.
- If you have a multiple pregnancy, even if you have had a previous successful VBAC.
- Two or more previous caesarean deliveries.

Risks associated with VBAC

A previous caesarean section leaves a scar on your uterus. This scar is a potentially weakened area that has a small associated risk of rupture or tear during labour because of the forceful contractions. The reported risk of uterine rupture is 1 per 200 births. This is a rare but serious complication for the mother and unborn infant. To reduce the risk of a tear or rupture, spontaneous labour is preferred but labour may need to be induced for some women.

A repeat caesarean section may be required if labour does not progress.

Benefits of a successful VBAC include:

- reduced blood loss;
- less likelihood of infection;
- shorter recovery time and hospital stay;
- reduced chance of readmission after giving birth;
- less need for strong pain relief medications;
- reduced risk of complications in future pregnancies;
Factors which improve your chance of a successful VBAC include:

- waiting at least 18 months after a caesarean section before becoming pregnant again;
- no complications such as medical problems;
- healthy weight range Body Mass Index (BMI) of less than 30 and eating low GI foods;
- going into labour naturally before 41 completed weeks of pregnancy with baby lying head down in an anterior position;
- baby’s estimated weight less than 4000 grams; and
- continuity of midwifery care.

Factors which reduce your chance of a successful VBAC can include:

- induction of labour;
- being overweight ie BMI of more than 35;
- no previous vaginal birth or labour;
- previous caesarean section for failure to progress; and
- large baby (over 4000 grams).

Labour

- Phone the hospital to discuss when to come in if: you are experiencing regular painful contractions;
- your membranes (waters) have broken;
- you are bleeding; and/or
- you have constant pain.

On admission, it is advisable that an intravenous cannula (IV) be inserted into your arm in case of bleeding due to possible scar problems.

It is advisable to monitor the baby’s heart rate continuously by the cardio-toco graph (CTG) machine once you are in established labour as fetal heart rate issues will often precede potential scar problems. To remain active in labour, you can request telemetry CTG monitoring which enables you to walk around without being attached to the machine.

The progress of your labour will be monitored closely, your doctor or midwife will assess the strength and timing of contractions along with fetal wellbeing.

Birth by caesarean

A caesarean is usually performed under spinal or epidural anaesthetic so that you are able to be awake for the birth of your baby. You do not watch your own operation as a screen is placed over your chest. A general anaesthetic is not a common choice but may sometimes be necessary.

A caesarean birth may be elective/planned or it may be an emergency/unplanned. There are many reasons why women have a caesarean birth, and these may include:

- Problems with mother – e.g. small pelvis, high blood pressure, bleeding, no progress in labour; and
- Problems with baby – e.g. wrong position, breech, too big or too small or distressed baby.

Preparation for a caesarean birth

If the plan is for you to have an elective or planned caesarean section you will be given an admission time & date with your Doctors appointment, where the operation will be discussed & a consent obtained. You will also be given instructions for blood tests & when to fast prior to your operation, as well as exercise advice & what activities are limited after your operation. You may also be asked to have a pre-admission clinic appointment to see an anesthetist.

For emergency caesarean births you will be prepared on the Maternity Unit and transported to theatre from there.

Skin to skin contact is advised as soon as possible after birth.

- However you feed your baby skin to skin will be encouraged for at least one hour, even if baby feeds early.
- Following a caesarean, if both mother and baby are well, baby will be placed on the mother’s chest whilst on the theatre table.
- If the above is not possible, your baby will have skin to skin within 10 minutes of arrival in the recovery room.
- If you have a general anaesthetic skin to skin will be within 10 minutes of being able to respond to baby.

Expectations

- For planned/elective caesarean, do not eat for 12 hours prior to admission.
- The abdomen and pubic hair may be clipped.
- A urinary catheter will be inserted into your bladder to keep it empty.
- A dose of antacid or citrate preparation is given to neutralise stomach acid.
- You may be in the operating theatre for more than an hour.
- Your support person/partner may come into the operating theatre with you unless you are having a general anaesthetic.
- You may take still photos of your baby at birth, but THS hospital policy does not allow videoing of procedures.
- Your hospital stay will be 2-3 days post birth as required.
- You will only be separated from your baby if;
  - You need a more prolonged stay in the recovery room;
  - You require a general anaesthetic;
  - Baby needs to go to the Special Care Nursery (SCN); and
  - If your baby is well but you require attention, then your partner or support person is encouraged to have contact and bond with your baby, on the Maternity Unit.
You and your baby after a caesarean birth

Whilst still in the operating theatre, your baby will be checked to ensure he/she is well. Your birth partner and you will be able to cuddle your baby. We will assist you to begin skin to skin contact with your baby as soon as possible after the birth. If you have chosen to breastfeed you should begin feeding as soon as your baby is showing signs of wanting to do so.

If your baby is premature, has medical reasons or is having problems with breathing, he/she may need to go to the Special Care Nursery (SCN) for observation. If this is the case, staff will take you and your partner to see your baby as soon as possible. You will need to express breastmilk if your baby is unable to feed from the breast, starting as soon as you can after birth.

After the operation

Pain relief

It is important in the first 2 days after the operation to ensure you have adequate and regular pain relief so that you can move around freely. Support your wound by applying firm pressure with the help of a rolled towel or a small pillow. Your need for pain relief should decrease with each day.

The Anaesthetic Service will visit you on the day after your caesarean birth to discuss your pain relief. You are usually confined to bed for 12-24 hours after the birth. When confined to bed there is a risk that you can develop clots in your legs (deep vein thrombosis). A drug is given as a small injection into the fatty tissue just under the skin, to help prevent deep vein thrombosis. It is important in the first 2 days after the operation to ensure you have adequate and regular pain relief so that you can move around freely. Support your wound by applying firm pressure with the help of a rolled towel or a small pillow. Your need for pain relief should decrease with each day.

Moving – getting out of bed

For most women it is quite safe to be out of bed the day after their caesarean birth. Circulation and deep breathing exercises are important to do regularly while resting in bed, until you are moving freely around the ward. These exercises and walking on the ward are encouraged to help prevent post-operative chest infection and deep vein thrombosis (DVT). When you return from theatre you may have pressure devices on your legs called SCUDS and special stockings called TEDS. This helps with the circulation until you are able to ambulate freely.

When getting out of bed for the first time ensure a staff member is present. Whilst you may feel normal when in bed you may find your legs are weak or you become dizzy the first time you try to stand. You may also find the wound pain increases. It is safer to be accompanied until you are sure any risk of falling has been assessed.

Wound

The incision will be located below your bikini line. The type of wound dressing used changes from time to time. Often the wound will be covered with a clear dressing that should remain intact for 7-10 days. You can remove it yourself in the shower. Generally you do not need to have your stitches removed. Sometimes staples are used which need to be removed, this can be done by the Extended Midwife Service (EMS) or by your GP.

If there is any redness or discharge from your wound notify midwifery/medical staff or when you get home see your family doctor.

Vaginal discharge

There will be some bleeding after the operation and this usually decreases over the next few days. If it increases tell your doctor or midwife. See page 41 for further information.

Intravenous cannula (drip) and urinary catheter

- You will be encouraged to sip fluids soon after the operation and eat a light meal when you feel ready. Once you are able to tolerate fluids the intravenous drip is usually removed.
- The day after your operation the urinary catheter is usually removed. This enables you to move freely, get up, shower and care for your baby.

Some people find difficulty with passing urine following removal of the catheter; the midwife caring for you will instruct you on how to measure the amount passed the first few times. Passing urine may also sting, if this happens tell the midwife, who can give you some medication to help neutralise the urine acidity. If stinging continues a specimen may be sent to pathology to rule out an infection.

A caesarean birth is a major operation where the baby is born through an incision or cut in your abdomen and uterus. The incision is usually just below the ‘bikini line’ so after healing is often hidden or less noticeable.
Returning to normal activities
Help at home is necessary over the first few weeks caring for your baby.
Initially you should only lift things around the weight of your baby but increase this activity as you feel able.
Ensure you do not put yourself or your baby at risk by taking on too much too soon. Be aware that it will take time to heal and stay safe.
Check with your insurance company before you begin to drive – some may not cover you in the first 6 weeks post operatively.

Will a caesarean birth be necessary in the future?
If a woman has had a lower uterine segment caesarean birth and there is not a recurrence of the problem that led to the first caesarean, then she may be able to have a vaginal birth next time. Factors such as the size and position of your baby can affect whether your next baby is born vaginally or by caesarean. Discuss this with your doctor/midwife.
Caesarean birth is a safe method for the birth of your baby but it is a major operation, and therefore the decision to have a caesarean is made carefully. If further information is required please request the RANZCOG leaflet on Caesarean Section or Vaginal Birth After Caesarean Section.

Medical pain relief options
Everyone manages labour differently and there are many pain relief options available to assist you.

TENS Machine (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation)
The TENS machine is a small, hand-held, battery operated unit, with wires and self-adhesive pads attached. The pads are placed on 4 points on your back. These pads produce an electrical pulse with a tingling sensation, that helps block the sensation of pain interpreted by the brain which occurs with contractions. It can work well for pain during any phase of labour, but it seems to work best for back pain.
Labour TENS machines can be hired privately through local medical companies and online. Operating instructions come with the machines.
For further information or hire call the Better Life Company on 6234 5144 or visit them at 83 Brisbane Street Hobart. Alternatively search Australian companies online for TENS hire.

Water Injections
It has been suggested that injections of small amounts of sterile water into, or just under, the skin of the lower back might be able to relieve some types of labour pain, especially the pain felt in the back. There are no known side effects for mother or baby.

Nitrous Oxide (Gas)
This is a mixture of nitrous oxide and oxygen sometimes called ‘laughing gas’. It is a very safe option for pain relief in labour. Some women find the gas helps by taking the “edge” off the pain of the contraction, others find it is a good focal point to help slow down breathing during contractions. The midwife will instruct you on how to use it during labour. You may experience nausea, light headedness and a dry mouth for a short time. There are no after effects for you or your baby. This is a great option if wanting minimal intervention.

Morphine and Pethidine
Narcotic medication given as a single dose injection either under the skin, into a muscle or via an intravenous cannula. It helps take the edge off contraction pains through a sedative effect but will not take all the pain away. Further doses can be given after around 2 hours. This medication does cross the placenta to the baby. It can make you and your baby sleepy, and this may reduce respiratory effort in your baby if given close to birth. Research indicates that these drugs when given in labour can reduce your baby’s sucking reflex, which may affect initiation of breastfeeding in the first 1-2 hours. After this time your baby will become less sleepy and breastfeeding should improve. Morphine is more rapidly eliminated than Pethidine so the effects to baby may resolve quicker. Please note these side effects are not seen in all babies whose mums have had narcotics during labour.

Epidural Anaesthesia
Epidural Anaesthesia is an effective means of pain relief and involves the injection of local anaesthetic and other pain relieving medication into the epidural space. This is the only pain relief that has the ability to take the pain of labour away almost completely.

You will always have an intravenous infusion inserted, a monitoring machine (CTG) to measure baby’s heart rate and to measure your contractions. A urinary bladder catheter is always needed.

Only a specialist doctor called an anaesthetist can give an epidural anaesthetic. You will be given a local anaesthetic into the skin of your back before the epidural is inserted.
After this you should only feel a dull pushing sensation on your back. A thin flexible plastic catheter is inserted into the epidural space and this will stay taped in place until after the birth when it will be removed.
Anaesthetic drugs are given continuously through this catheter via a pump to provide pain relief through the labour, pushing and any suturing that may be required. There is also an option to have Patient Controlled Epidural Analgesia (PCEA) where you are given a smaller continual does but can push a button to provide extra pain relief as needed. Management and care are the same for standard epidurals and PCEA.

If you have an epidural for pain relief in labour it will be turned off once any suturing has occurred after the birth of your placenta. Generally it will take 1-2 hours to feel full sensation and strength in your legs again. When you stand for the first time after having an epidural removed please ensure you are not at risk of falling by having a staff member with you to assess the situation.

Morphine and Pethidine
These are strong pain relievers given by injection. At all times prior to the administration of these narcotics or any other drugs, the midwife or doctor will need to assess the progress of your labour. They take between 5 to 30 minutes to work depending on the way the drug is given.
Advantages of Epidural Anaesthesia

- It can allow you to rest during a long or painful labour.
- It is the only form of pain relief that causes little or no drowsiness to you or your baby.
- If a forceps, caesarean birth or other intervention is needed to deliver your baby, a stronger epidural may be used to help to relieve the pain of these procedures.

An epidural does not necessarily lead to an increased risk of a caesarean birth. However there is a slightly higher chance of a ventouse/forceps birth as the urge to push may not be felt.

Anaesthetic and pain-relieving procedures are typically reliable and safe but do have some risks. Despite the high standards of medical practice, complications can occur.

Possible complications of Epidural Anaesthesia

- Your blood pressure may fall and this may affect your baby. To prevent this, an intravenous drip line is inserted beforehand so fluid and medications can be given quickly.
- Walking around is not possible due to heaviness and numbness in the legs but you can usually move freely in the bed.
- Irregular or ineffective pain relief can sometimes occur if the anaesthetic agent does not spread evenly. A top-up may be necessary or a repositioning or replacement of the epidural may occur.
- A leak of spinal fluid can cause a severe headache. A number of leaks heal on their own while others may require a further epidural injection. The risk of this is about one in one hundred.
- Local tenderness and bruising can occur around the site of the epidural but usually resolves within 7-10 days.
- Shivering, nausea and vomiting may occur but this frequently occurs in a normal labour as well.
- Intense itching with some types of medication can sometimes occur.
- Rarely, an allergic reaction to an anaesthetic agent may occur.
- Occasionally, the anaesthetic service is unavailable or delayed because the anaesthetist may be tending to other urgent responsibilities.

Rare complications of Epidural Anaesthesia

- The site of the epidural may become infected and you will require antibiotics. Very rarely this may lead to meningitis or an epidural abscess.
- The local anaesthetic may be accidentally injected into a blood vessel causing dizziness, a metallic taste in the mouth, and in extreme cases, convulsions and significant heart problems.
- Temporary damage to spinal nerves outside the spinal column may occur. Virtually all of these cases recover within a few weeks or months.
- Permanent but rare damage may occur ranging from nerve damage to paralysis in one in 20,000 to 200,000 women undergoing an epidural anaesthetic depending on the severity and type of the damage.

Unexpected outcomes of pregnancy

If unexpected complications occur with your pregnancy, the hospital has staff and services available to support and assist you. Any concerns can be discussed with the midwives and doctors. Loss and grief are not usually associated with pregnancy, but not all pregnancies progress smoothly. Unfortunately, miscarriages do occur, as do stillbirths, and some babies are diagnosed with medical problems. We are able to call on resources in the hospital and community that can support you during your time of need.
Infant feeding
Infant feeding

All THS hospitals are Baby Friendly Accredited providing a supportive environment for women regardless of their feeding choice.

Our policies support the establishment and maintenance of breastfeeding. Should you wish to see a copy of the complete breastfeeding policy, ask your midwife.

If you are unsure about how to feed your baby, feel free to discuss with your midwife or doctor so an informed decision can be made. We also have further literature we can give you to support your decision.

If you did not breastfeed last time or had issues it can be good to talk this over with your midwife, attend a breastfeeding class or see a lactation consultant.

Breastfeeding

Antenatal education

Research indicates the importance of learning about breastfeeding during your pregnancy. We suggest you include your partner in your education as they then understand better what to expect in regards to labour and breastfeeding. The hospital runs breastfeeding education opportunities regularly. To find out more information, ask your midwife. You need to book early as these sessions are very popular. If you have any specific breastfeeding concerns you can also book an antenatal appointment with one of our accredited lactation consultants through your midwife.

Please cancel if you are unable to attend as sometimes there is a waiting list.

There is no special preparation required for breastfeeding however it can be helpful to learn a little more before the baby comes. Mums do best if they have read all the available information about feeding, watched a baby being breastfed, gone to a breastfeeding class or sorted out any concerns before baby comes. Doing these things can help you be more prepared and you may find the establishment of breastfeeding easier.

Usually your breasts will increase in size during your pregnancy due to hormonal influences, with most of the growth occurring in the first 20 weeks or in the last few weeks.

Avoid using soaps and perfumed creams or body lotions on your breasts, especially in the last few weeks of pregnancy. This helps preserve the action of the natural lubricant secreted by pores on the areola.

Exclusive breastfeeding

- Breastmilk alone is the only food or drink a baby needs for the first 6 months of life.
- Breastfeeding continues to be important after 6 months when other food is introduced.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends breastfeeding for 2 years and beyond.
- Offering your baby bottles or a dummy can lead to less frequent breastfeeds and you may not make enough milk.

Breastfeeding is a learnt skill and like many other skills, it takes time, patience and practice.

Why is breastfeeding better for your baby?

- A healthier baby - helps protect against gastroenteritis (tummy upsets), ear infections, allergies, chest and urinary tract infections and juvenile diabetes.
- Longer term, breastfeeding helps protect against childhood cancers, obesity and heart disease.
- Perfect food - helps baby grow, develop and learn.
- Breastfed babies have improved speech, sight, muscle development, reduced tooth decay and gum disease.
- Perfect way to bond and feel close to mother.

Breastfeeding is best for you because:

- Saves money – bottle feeding with infant formula can cost up to $3000 per year;
- With fewer trips to the doctor, medical expenses will be less;
- Saves time – breastfeeding is quick, efficient and hygienic - more time to relax and enjoy your baby;
- Helps you return to your pre pregnant weight more quickly;
- Helps protect against against breast and ovarian cancer and osteoporosis;
- It is also VERY good for the environment - no packaging, transport or factory costs; and
- One important aspect for prevention of SIDS.

Baby’s behaviour before the first breastfeed

If left skin to skin on your abdomen after birth your baby will gradually crawl toward your breast.

Your baby will start mouthing; hand to mouth movements; licking fingers and touching your nipple which makes it erect and easier to attach to.

As your breast brushes baby’s cheek, baby will turn his/her head towards your breast: open the mouth wide and protrude his/her tongue over the bottom lip to lick your nipple.

When ready, baby will attach to your breast and begin to suck. This usually occurs within the first hour of birth.

Babies breastfeed they don’t nipple feed. It is essential baby takes a good mouthful of your breast not just your nipple. Encourage your baby to self attach for the first feed.

If possible, baby should be kept skin to skin with you for an hour even if they feed earlier.

The first few days

This is a good time to learn and practice getting your baby on the breast (attachment). All midwives on the Maternity Unit are able to assist you to achieve good attachment. Babies need to take a good amount of breast tissue into their mouth for this to occur and to try and ensure feeding is comfortable for you. Getting it right in the first few days can make the transition at home easier.

Your breasts are soft in the first few days before your breastmilk changes from the highly nutritious colostrum to mature milk. It is important during these days that your baby is offered breastfeeds frequently. A baby that appears sleepy may need stimulating to feed more often after the initial settling in period (around the first 24 hours).
Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding

The following 10 Steps to Successful breastfeeding have been established by the World Health Organisation and the United Nation’s Children’s Fund for all facilities providing maternal and newborn care. The THS has adopted these steps as a summary of their Breastfeeding Policy - the full policy may be viewed on request.

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.
2. Train all health care staff in the skills necessary to implement the policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Place babies in skin-to-skin contact with their mothers immediately following birth for at least an hour and encourage mothers to recognise when their babies are ready to breastfeed offering help when needed.
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed, and how to maintain lactation even if they are separated from their infants.
6. Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.
7. Practise rooming-in - allow mothers and babies to remain together 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
9. Give no artificial teats or dummies to breastfeeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support and refer mothers on discharge from the facility.

Hints to achieve and recognise good positioning and attachment

- Have baby’s body facing you and held close to your body, with their mouth next to your nipple.
- Point your nipple towards baby’s nose and tickle their bottom lip with the edge of the areola until their mouth is wide open, then bring baby into your breast with your hand behind their shoulders.
- When attached well, baby’s lips should be turned outwards and their chin should be well into your breast, leaving their nose clear.
- It is normal to feel some tenderness for the first 6-8 sucks while baby stretches your nipple to the back of their mouth, then the feed should feel comfortable – not painful.
- Your baby should have rhythmic sucking with well rounded cheeks and you should hear swallowing.
- Your nipple may be elongated at the end of a feed but will still be a good shape and colour.
- Any problem with this – ask your midwife to review a feed with you.

Demand feeding

- Is feeding your baby according to their needs – the more often you feed the more milk you will make. This is called supply = demand.
- In the early days it is normal for your baby to feed a minimum of 6-8 times and up to 12 times in 24 hours to help your breastmilk supply to establish.
- Rooming in (keeping your baby in your room) allows you to recognise hunger cues and provides the right environment for demand feeding. See page 7,11 or 41 for further information on rooming in.

Once the milk comes in

Breastmilk, once established, looks a little like skim milk, whitish blue in colour, and thin. It is not “too weak”, it always has the right amount and type of nutrients, perfect for your baby.

Expressing and storage of breastmilk

Some mothers find it necessary to express milk from the breast to give to the baby later. If you plan to express on a long term basis, you need good skills to keep your milk supply. You should talk about this with your midwife or lactation consultant before the birth. You will find information on how to store breastmilk in your baby’s Personal Health Record book (given to you after your birth). Support from your Child Health & Parenting Service (CHAPS) and the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) is invaluable 1800 MUM 2 MUM or 1800 686 268

Thaw breastmilk in cold water or it can be thawed in the fridge overnight. Warm in a jug of hot water when ready to use. Microwaves should not be used. Once heated it cannot be reheated and used again so only thaw what you need to feed baby.

Avoiding teats, dummies and complementary feeds

- Your new baby is learning to breastfeed and can become confused if offered a teat or dummy before he has learnt to breastfeed well.
- Offering fluid other than breastmilk will decrease the time he breastfeeds, and reduce your milk supply.
- Frequent unrestricted sucking at the breast will satisfy your baby.

Feeding cues (signs that your baby is ready to feed)

- Hands up to mouth.
- Sucking movements.
- Soft cooing, sighing sounds.
- Head movements and stretching.
- Crying is a late sign of hunger – don’t wait until then!
bowel actions change from black meconium to a soft mustard yellow in appearance. Most babies will have 1-3 bowel actions per day in the first 3 months of life.

- Your baby starts to gain weight after an initial loss of 5-10% and will regain birth weight by 10 days to 2 weeks. There should be an average gain of 150 gms per week.

If breastmilk supply is a problem, talk to a midwife, lactation consultant or CHAPS nurse about the many things you can do to improve your supply.

Breastfeeding and returning to work

- It is possible to work and breastfeed. Many mothers express at work for their baby’s feeds.
- Discuss with your midwife, lactation consultant or CHAPS nurse.

Support after birth

Lactation consultant telephone advice
Available from 8.30am-4.00 pm, Monday to Friday.
LGH: (03) 6777 8934
North West: 0409 973 547

Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)
Telephone 1800 686 268 (1800 MUM 2 MUM) for Breastfeeding Helpline, local group contacts and enquiries www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Child Health and Parenting Services (CHAPS): incorporates Parenting Centre
Telephone CHAPS North & NW 1300 064 544.

Tasmanian Multiple Birth Association
Telephone 0420 588 805 or go to www.tasmba.org.au/ for enquiries.

Parent Helpline
24 hour telephone 1300 808 178 for advice and support for any stressful feeding or parenting issues that need immediate attention.

Your Doctor
Your family doctor or obstetrician if the symptoms are not getting better in 8-12 hours, or immediately if you feel very unwell.

Formula feeding

Some mothers who plan to formula feed give their baby the first feed at the breast, so the baby gets a very precious feed of colostrum (mothers first milk). If you don’t want to do that, you could consider expressing some and giving it to your baby. If you have chosen to formula feed prior to your baby’s birth we strongly recommend skin to skin contact immediately following the birth for at least one hour. This first contact is important for all babies regardless of method of feeding.

Remember to bring a tin of formula suitable for a newborn baby under 6 months to hospital with you. Your midwife will show you how to make up the formula and discuss how to sterilise the bottles, teats, and caps when you are in the maternity ward. You don’t need to bring your own teats or bottles as these are provided.

Refer to the formula tin for appropriate amounts per feed. The amount will increase as baby grows. Ask the Child Health & Parenting Service for advice.

If you plan to use infant formula, remember to offer skin to skin contact on a regular basis. As formula fed babies sleep heavily it is recommended by Red Nose (previously known as Sids and Kids) in accordance with the safe sleeping guidelines that your baby sleeps in the same room as you in its own safe sleep environment.

When formula feeding always hold your baby during the feed as this offers your baby visual stimulation and close physical contact with you. It is not a recommended safe practice to prop feed your baby as there is a danger of choking.

Further literature to support your choice of feeding is available on request. Help after discharge with formula feeding issues can be obtained from your midwife at home visits, child health nurse or doctor.

Infant tooth decay

The following may increase the risk of infant tooth decay:

- Honey or sweetener on the dummy;
- Infrequent tooth brushing or not cleaning after the first tooth appears;
- Prolonged and frequent bottle feeding when teeth are present;
- Adding any sweeteners to the bottle; and
- If your baby has a bottle or dummy which has been in the mother’s mouth bacteria will be transferred which may cause decay or infection in your baby’s mouth.

Baby is often alert, awake and responsive in the first hour after birth - making it the perfect time for the first breastfeed.
Your baby is born
Skin to skin contact following birth

After birth your baby is usually alert and ready to get to know you. Uninterrupted skin to skin contact is important for all mothers and babies for at least the first hour because it helps:

- Baby feel more secure;
- Baby maintain body temperature and blood sugar;
- Improve oxygen levels for baby;
- Baby breathe more regularly; and
- Baby gets bugs from your skin, which protects him from infection.

Skin to skin contact until your baby’s first breastfeed is important because it:

- Keeps baby warm and cries less;
- Helps baby use instincts to find the nipple and attach correctly;
- Helps baby learn to breastfeed;
- Promotes a feeling of closeness between you and your baby; and
- Helps ensure you have enough milk and fewer breastfeeding problems.

During this special time, the midwife will make sure you and your baby are well. Once your baby has had at least an hour of skin to skin and has had the first breastfeed then your partner or support person may like to cuddle or even skin to skin cuddle baby. If you are choosing to bottle feed, we encourage you to continue skin to skin for at least an hour. You can give a feed whilst cuddling your baby.

Your body after birth

Straight after birth the fundus or top of your uterus can be felt like a ‘cricket ball’ just below your navel. Your midwife will check to see if your uterus is shrinking each day. By six weeks it should be back to its pre-pregnant size.

Some mothers experience ‘after pains’ for the first few days. They may be mild or severe contractions and often get worse during breastfeeding. Breastfeeding makes the uterus shrink back to its normal size more quickly.

Lochia is the word used to describe the blood loss you have vaginally after birth. To begin with it will be red, just like a heavy period, but within a few days your vaginal loss will be less in amount and much lighter in colour. It may increase during breastfeeding as your uterus contracts.

Over the next six weeks the loss becomes lighter and stops. If your loss becomes bright red again and gets heavier or smelly after going home you should let your doctor know.

If you have problems in the first few days with:

- Sensing the urge to void (pass urine);
- A slow or hesitant flow of urine;
- Pain on passing urine;
- A feeling that you are not emptying your bladder properly;
- Frequent leakage of urine; and
- Passing urine more frequently than every 2 hours.

Let your midwife, doctor or physiotherapist know.

It is important to have regular bowel motions after birth. Drink plenty of fluids and eat a diet that is high in fibre. The midwives caring for you can offer you medication that can help to soften you bowel motion if needed.

If you have any problems with your bowel or bladder in hospital please talk with your midwife or doctor. A Continence & Womens Health Physiotherapy may be available via outpatients - if you have any questions ask your midwife to refer you. All women are seen on a priority basis.

Any sutures in your perineum are dissolvable. Please see page 28 for further care of stitches information.

Keeping your infant safe in hospital

- All hospital staff are identified by authorised THS identification tags.
- Baby should not be taken outside Maternity Unit until you are discharged. When taking your baby out of your room put the infant in the cot and push the cot. Do not carry your infant in your arms outside the room or allow others to either unless you have been discharged.
- Your baby will wear two identification name bands throughout his/her stay in hospital. If your baby’s name band is loose or has come off, please tell your midwife.
- The Maternity Unit has a rooming in policy, which means having your baby with you all the time. It is your responsibility not to leave your baby unattended. If you leave your room/ward during visiting hours, ask a family member to watch your baby.
42 Your baby is born

Remember

Look after yourself

Save energy by trying to have a rest during the day so you can cope with evening tiredness. Sleep when your baby sleeps.

Prevention of falls

Mothers and newborns can be at risk of falls. After you have had your baby, you may be very tired and drowsy because of lack of sleep, blood loss or pain-relief medication and it is important that you take steps such as the following to reduce this risk of falls:

• Obtaining help when you first get out of bed after having your baby. Later on, take your time when getting in or out of bed.
• Ensuring that the area around your bed is free from obstacles such as extra chairs, presents, surplus blankets, clothes and footwear left lying on the floor.
• Placing frequently used items within easy reach.
• Asking for assistance if you feel unsteady or when moving your baby into or from the cot.

• When using the bathroom facilities, use the shower chair and rails provided. If you feel unsafe, remain seated and call staff for assistance.
• Placing baby on his/her back in the cot if you are feeling sleepy.
• Wear non-slip footwear.
• Turn the light on when getting out of bed or attending to your baby during the night.

To keep your baby safe from falling:

• Addressing any safety issues when changing nappies or at bath time.
• Change the nappy in the cot rather than on the bed.
• Never leave the baby unattended on any raised surface without supervision.
• Don’t carry your baby in your arms while you are walking around the unit. Use the cot when you are walking around the maternity unit.

Sex and intimacy

After you have given birth to your baby, you may feel a variety of emotions about your body. It has created another living being and you should feel proud of it. However, so often women feel impatient because it may take time for their body to return to its pre-pregnant shape.

Your vagina may be tender, especially if you have had stitches. If your baby is feeding frequently, you may feel tired of physical contact.

Share these normal feelings with your partner. Let your partner know that you do care, that you do enjoy cuddling and touching, but that you may not be feeling up to sexual intercourse for a few weeks. You can be sexually intimate without penetration occurring. Be imaginative but always be sensitive to one another’s feelings. While you are breastfeeding, there is a change of hormones in your body. This will mean that your vagina may be drier than usual and that you may need a lubricant. If dryness is a major problem, please talk to your doctor.

Also during sex, your breasts may leak, so don’t be surprised!

Use a lubricant, go gently, relax and don’t forget to use contraception!

Contraception

There is a chance that you could become pregnant before your six week check so we recommend that if you are sexually active, and you don’t want to get pregnant, that you use some form of contraception, eg condoms. Some women choose to have the implant called “Implanon” and this medication can be given to you prior to you leaving hospital. There are other options available that may be more appropriate for you and your lifestyle. Your midwife and doctor are available to discuss your contraceptive options.

For more information visit Family Planning Alliance Australia www.familyplanningallianceaustralia.org.au/resources/

Family Planning Tasmania www.fpt.asn.au/advice/contraception

Look after yourself

• Learn to ask for help.
• Develop a practical support system.
• Take time out just for you – do something you really enjoy.
• Try to allow some time for exercise. It increases health, makes you less tired, helps to regain your figure, and increases self esteem.
• Don’t feel guilty ignoring the phone or doorbell, especially at bath time, during meals, feeding and rest times.
• Put time aside for meals, especially with your family. Sit down and take your time to eat. Try not to miss meals.
• Seek out new mothers so you don’t feel lonely or isolated.
• A GP check is recommended 6 weeks after birth to ensure that mothers are recovering from her pregnancy and delivery, and are coping with baby’s demands.
• Follow up might include - breast exam; urine; perineum check; blood pressure; pap smears and contraception advice if this has not already been attended at 2 week check or prior to discharge.
Your baby is born

Remember

Baby blues
Remember... It is normal for all mothers to experience times of emotional and physical exhaustion. If your depression or anxiety lasts more than two weeks, seek help.

Feelings

Baby blues
Some women experience mood swings about 3–4 days after the birth of their baby. One moment they are happy and the next they may be crying. These ‘blues’ are normal and usually go away within 10 days. They are like an emotional release after the pregnancy and birth and are often hormonally induced.

During your hospital stay we are able to provide counselling services if you begin to feel overwhelmed.

Some signs and what may cause Postnatal Depression?
Postnatal Depression (PND) affects almost 16 per cent of new mothers in Australia, it doesn’t have one definite cause, but is likely to result from a combination of factors, including:

- A past history of depression and/or anxiety;
- A stressful pregnancy;
- Experiencing severe ‘baby blues’;
- Sleep deprivation;
- Prolonged labour and/or delivery complications;
- A lack of practical, financial and/or emotional support;
- Past history of abuse;
- Unrealistic expectations about motherhood; and
- Moving house.

Signs resulting in you getting support immediately may be:

- Feeling like life isn’t worth living;
- Having thoughts about hurting yourself; and
- Worrying about hurting your baby.

Although some women get depressed straight after childbirth, some women may not feel ‘down’ until several weeks or months later. Depression that occurs within 6 months of childbirth may be Postnatal Depression (PND).

Your family or partner may notice that you are depressed before you do. They should encourage you to seek help, if they suspect you are suffering from depression.

If you think you have PND there are several people you can contact:

- Family GP
- Child Health Parenting Service
- Family and friends
- CHAPS North & NW 1300 064 544

You can visit these websites:

www.beyondblue.org.au
www.cope.org.au

- If you attended appointments with the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Service antenatally you can also contact them on the numbers provided in the front of this booklet.
- Mental Health Service hotline freecall 1800 332 388.

It is normal for all mothers to experience times of emotional and physical exhaustion. If your depression or anxiety lasts more than two weeks, seek help.

Stress management for parents

It is normal for parents to have times when they feel angry, frustrated and helpless. The responsibility of parenting can weigh heavily, especially when you are unable to feel in control of a situation you are responsible for (an example can be when your baby is crying for no apparent reason). If you have tried all the settling techniques and nothing is working and you are feeling fed up...

STOP

- Put your baby down in a safe place - in the cot with the cot side up.
- Leave the room – no baby has died from being left to cry for 5 10 minutes but some have died from brain damage from being shaken by an angry parent.
- Consider why am I (or was I) angry? Where does it stem from?
- Take 10 slow deep breaths – concentrating on making the out breath slow.
- Take action: Talk to someone if you are still feeling angry.

Lifeline telephone 131 114
Tasmanian Parent Line telephone 1300 808 178
Beyondblue telephone 1300 224 636, www.beyondblue.org.au
Pregnancy Birth & Baby helpline 1800 882 436

- Nothing is too awful that it can’t be talked about.
- Everyone has a right to feel safe – including your baby.
- ANGER, if not given thoughtful direction, will find its own target.
Your baby is born

Remember
To take time out if you are feeling angry, stressed or frustrated with your baby. A couple of minutes time out and a breath of fresh air can make all the difference.

Postnatal VTE prevention
After giving birth to reduce the risk of a VTE all women are encouraged to:
• Resume walking after your baby is born if safe to do so.
• Avoid becoming dehydrated, especially during the warmer months.
• Wear elastic compression stockings if you have been advised to do so, especially if you have had a caesarean birth.

Women who have been assessed as having a high risk of developing a VTE will be prescribed medicine called anti-coagulation (injections) to prevent blood clots forming during the pregnancy and after the baby is born. These medications plus the above steps should prevent the development of a VTE. These medications are safe to use if you are breastfeeding.

Physiotherapy
Physiotherapy may be able to assist you further with some of the common aches and pains of pregnancy (such as back or pelvic pain and carpal tunnel syndrome). Community Physiotherapy and THS Physiotherapy offer individual appointments to help you – please discuss your problems with your midwife or doctor.

Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercise
Our pelvic floor muscles help with control of our bladder and bowel and are important for sexual function. All women need to strengthen these muscles after being pregnant. However, over one third of women do the exercise incorrectly.

If you experience difficulties performing the exercise, poor control over your bladder or bowel, or symptoms of prolapse you are invited to seek referral to the Continence & Women’s Health Physiotherapist for assessment and treatment.

Referrals are accepted from your doctor, midwife or allied health profession and you will receive a letter to let you know you are on the wait list and will be phoned with an appointment.

After your baby is born
A Continence & Women’s Health Physiotherapist may be available on the maternity ward – if you have any questions or concerns ask your midwife to refer you. All women are seen on a priority basis.

Neonatal Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (NPICU) and Special Care Nursery (SCN)
Sometimes all does not go as planned in a pregnancy, labour or birth. Some babies are born in need of special care and observation, and may need to go to the NPICU or SCN.

Sometimes they may even need intensive care treatment, though this is most unusual unless your baby is premature or has a medical condition.

The RHH NPICU unit in Hobart is the Tasmanian referral centre for premature babies under 30 weeks in singleton pregnancies and under 32 weeks for twin or higher multiple pregnancies and sick babies, from the LGH and by negotiation with the NW under 32-34 weeks, as Launceston may also be the referral centre in some cases. The RHH NPICU is situated on the same floor as the Maternity Unit, 3rd floor, D Block. The Unit has highly trained medical and nursing staff, and offers the latest in technological care for sick and premature babies.

If it is anticipated that your baby may need to go to NPICU or SCN after birth, we will arrange for you to have a tour of the unit in your area. In the North & NW of the state women will be transferred to the RHH if it is thought they may be in labour or require delivery and are under 30 weeks pregnant. Sometimes babies who are born prematurely at the LGH may also need to be transferred so they can receive specialised care and treatment.

Visiting hours are unrestricted for parents. The only children allowed into the unit are siblings.

Parents are actively encouraged to participate in the care of their baby while in NPICU and SCN, including cuddling, bathing and feeding. You may also receive support while your baby is NPICU and SCN from a physiotherapist, occupational therapist or speech pathologist. This is to assist with your baby’s development.

If baby is in NPICU or SCN for a long time, it is likely mum will be discharged before baby, this can be very difficult. Chat to staff for support as our midwives and social workers may be able to assist with accommodation choices and provide ongoing assistance.
Care of your baby

During your hospital stay the midwives will assist you in many aspects of baby care. Please feel free to ask your midwives questions as they are trained to give the appropriate information.

Sleep
It is important to understand that baby is born with a sleep/wake pattern already in place; we call it the baby’s ‘natural biohythms’. Therefore if you have a baby that is active in the uterus when you are in bed at night then chances are you will have an awake and alert baby at night when they are born. It can take up to 6 weeks or longer for this natural sleep pattern to turn around.

Best of all try to sleep when your baby sleeps. Be patient as there will be a time when your family routine will be normal again.

First bath
Usually babies first bath is delayed until they are a day old so they don’t get too cold.

Ask your midwife questions, there are many things to learn about your baby at this time.

Baby’s fingernails are sometimes long and can cause scratches to their face. Be careful as the nails are adhered to the ends of fingers until baby is about three months old, so cutting them with scissors or clippers before this time may cut baby’s skin. Gently peel the nails back after clippers before this time may cut old, so cutting them with scissors or fingers until baby is about three months as the nails are adhered to the ends of can cause scratches to their face. Be careful baby’s skin. Gently peel the nails back after this time.

Nappy area
With baby boys the foreskin is attached to the head of the penis up until about three years of age. Therefore it is important to attempt to retract the foreskin as it may cause damage. Nature has designed it like that to protect the sensitive penis from faeces and urine. Normal cleaning as your baby is bathed and normal nappy care is enough to clean the penis. Infant male circumcision is not performed at any THG hospital in any circumstance including religious and cultural reasons.

With baby girls the labia are often swollen and red and sometimes there is sticky mucus which appears around the vaginal area and on occasions some light bleeding. This is caused by the mother’s hormones and will disappear soon. If you are concerned ask your midwife.

A light orange/pinkish stain is sometimes noted in the nappy and mistaken for blood. This is caused by a reaction between chemicals in the babies urine called urates and chemicals in the nappy fibres. If you are at all concerned please seek advice.

Unwell baby
Sometimes without prior warning a full term baby becomes sick or requires special monitoring and may need to spend time in Neonatal Paediatric Intensive Care Unit or Special Care Nursery. If this period extends beyond the normal length of stay for the mother then she is often discharged before the baby. This can be difficult and hard for the parents to deal with. It is important to discuss your feelings with the staff caring for you and your baby.

Please see information on NPICU and SCN in this booklet.

Accepting help
If friends and relatives offer help, they will often take it as a compliment if you accept. Suggested helpful things for them to do may include household chores, especially the odd bit of laundry or vacuuming, an occasional meal things are twice as helpful as minding the baby because they give you more time to rest, to take time out with your partner, and for both of you to spend time with your baby. Learn to accept the offer of help.

Tasmanian Personal Health Record (Blue Book)
After the birth of your baby you will receive a Personal Health Record, a blue book, in which you may record all details about your child’s growth, development and health for the next four years. The book should be taken with you when visiting with a health professional, Child Health & Parenting Services (CHAPS) nurse, doctor, or dentist.

Getting to know your baby
During your stay in hospital we will help you and your new baby get to know each other. To assist this we encourage “rooming in” which means having your baby with you all the time. See pages 7, 11, 41 for further information on rooming in. A midwife will care for you, and assist and support you with the practical aspects of caring for your baby. This is a learning time so ask lots of questions!

Take notice of your baby after birth and understand their cues. Your baby is capable of eye contact with you (for short moments), they know your voice and this can be reassuring for them. Your baby will respond to light, sound, facial expressions and be capable of visual tracking with certain objects. They learn very early to protect their sleep in known environments where they feel safe. A baby communicates through their behaviour, watch for these cues.

Remember
Best of all try to sleep when your baby sleeps.
There will be a time when your family routine will be normal again.
Baby’s communication

Babies communicate in many ways. Crying is just one way of communicating with you. Other ways include: eye rubbing, jerky movements, yawning, rooting or sucking if hungry, not holding your gaze, grizzling.

Is your baby?

Hungry…

Your baby has “growth spurts” regularly, so may want to feed more often to satisfy hunger. If you are breastfeeding this frequent feeding will also build up your milk supply.

Crying is the last sign of hunger; baby will mouth about and try to suck on their hand or something else first.

Lonely…

Your baby needs to have the warmth and reassurance of your presence.

Lots of cuddles is a good thing, you can’t spoil a child with love.

Uncomfortable…

Maybe your baby is too hot or too cold, or has a wet or dirty nappy, or is wrapped too tightly, been in the same position too long.

In pain…

Baby may show this by screaming, drawing their knees up and/or generally fussing.

Tired…

Avoid over stimulation and excitement. Gentle rocking before settling will help.

Recognise the three key tired signs:

• Grizzly;
• Jerky movements; and
• Facial grimacing.

When your baby is showing these signs, it may help to swaddle them gently and put them straight to bed. Some babies need help settling, refer to the section on Setting techniques.

Overstimulated…

Babies are learning a lot and very quickly so can get overwhelmed and need quiet time to calm down. Signs of overstimulation include: not interested in playing, turning head away or not meeting your gaze, yawning. If you recognize these signs give your baby even a few minutes of time and space, watch for a happy and alert baby before resuming interactions.

For further information on crying babies, see your Tasmanian Personal Health Record book (blue book), your Child Health & Parenting Service or doctor, or contact the Tasmanian Parent Helpline, telephone 1300 888 178.

There is also good information found at www.raisingchildren.net.au

Settling techniques

There are many ways of settling and comforting your baby, and during your stay on the postnatal ward your midwife will help you to learn and practice some of these. They include:

• Rhythmic patting;
• Rocking/cradling;
• Walking: with a pram or cuddling baby;
• Carry baby in a sling against your body;
• Baby massage;
• Swaddling or wrapping in a bunny rug or sheet;
• Relaxation bath;
• Sucking;
• Positioning baby over your knee, or arm or shoulder;
• Nappy change;
• Soothing and rhythmic sounds, eg lullaby, music, vacuum cleaner, washing machine, singing or talking to your baby;
• Baby sling or hammock; and
• Allowing someone else to hold baby.

Take time out if you are feeling angry, stressed or frustrated with your baby. A couple of minutes time out and a breath of fresh air can make all the difference.

It is important to understand that you may try all of the above suggestions and still not settle your baby. Try to stay calm and not take it personally. It’s never OK to shake babies, owning our feelings and taking steps to prevent irreversible harm are very important.


If you need support or advice at home, telephone CHAPS North & NW during business hours on 1300 064 544 or Tasmanian Parent Helpline on 1300 888 178.

You may also find information and videos on www.raisingchildren.net.au to be beneficial.
Safe sleeping

It is important to be familiar with information on how to safely sleep your baby and ways to reduce the risk of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) including Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). It is important that you understand this information before your baby is born, so you can be prepared and get your baby’s cot/bassinet ready.

For information on Australian standards for infant cots go to www.kidsafe.com.au. When purchasing a cot the code you need to see is AS2172 to meet Australian standards.

It is THS Policy not to have your baby sleep in your bed with you.

For further information on safe sleeping please go to www.rednose.com.au

Immunisations

Immunisation is a simple yet safe and highly effective way of protecting both adults and children from some harmful and contagious diseases before contact occurs. It has been estimated that through vaccination programmes up to 3 million lives are saved per year worldwide.

Vaccinations use the body’s natural defence mechanisms to help build resistance to targeted viruses. This means if you are exposed to that virus in the future your body’s immune system is able to respond and prevent you from developing that disease or in some cases ensure only a milder strain occurs.

Immunising your child not only gives them protection but means there is a lower chance that your child will pass on these viruses to vulnerable children and adults who cannot be fully immunised. Fortunately modern advances mean vaccinations today are very safe and serious reactions are rare. Please go to www.immunise.health.gov.au for further information.

Your baby will be offered Hepatitis B vaccine at birth. Please refer to page 14 for comprehensive information on Hepatitis B vaccination.

In you babies Personal Health Record book (given to you after your baby’s birth) you will find the immunisation schedule recommended from birth to 4 years. We strongly recommend you immunise your child. For further discussion on childhood immunisations please see your GP or Child Health Nurse.

Plagiocephaly (misshapen head)

It is common for a newborn baby to have an unusual head shape. This can be caused by the position of your baby in the uterus during pregnancy, or can happen during birth. Your baby’s head should go back to normal shape within about 6 weeks after birth. Flattening of the head in one area may happen if a baby lies with its head repeatedly in the same position for a long time. Sometimes a flat spot develops when a baby has limited neck movement and prefers resting their head in one particular position.

Prevention of misshapen head

Sleep position

Place baby at alternate ends of the cot to sleep, or change the position of the cot in the room. Babies look at fixed objects like windows, by changing their cot position you will encourage them to look at different angles.

Tummy time and play time

Place your baby on their tummy or side to play when awake and always supervise. Change the position of toys they like to look at. Tummy time also helps with baby’s muscle and eye development.

From as early as one or two weeks of age you can place toys or faces in different positions to encourage your baby to turn their head both ways. Your baby can follow your voice and maintain eye contact, and turn their head themselves each way if you support their head in your hands while they are awake and alert.

Carrying your baby

Carry your baby in different positions varying the way you hold them. Speak to your Midwife if you are unsure about safe ways to carry your baby.

Talk to your Child Health & Parenting Service Nurse or GP if you are worried about your baby’s head shape.

Although the causes of SIDS have not yet been found, research has identified factors that will reduce the risks of SIDS (cot death) and unexpected sleep accidents.

- Sleep baby on their back.
- Keep your baby in a smoke free environment during pregnancy and beyond.
- Avoid letting your baby get too hot.
- Breastfeed your baby, if possible.
- Use light bedclothes. No doonas, pillows or cot bumpers.
- Use firm well fitting mattress.
- Tuck bedclothes in securely.
- Make sure baby’s head and face is uncovered.
- Place baby’s feet at the bottom of the cot.
- Place baby in a safe cot in their parents room for six to 12 months.
- Provide a safe sleep environment day and night.
Screening tests for your baby

Newborn Screening Test (NST)
The Newborn Screening Test is a routine procedure to screen for several rare disorders. Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment can prevent or greatly reduce the effects of these disorders. A pamphlet explaining these rare disorders will be given to you before the procedure is performed on your baby.

It needs to be between 36-56 hours after your baby’s first feed when the test is taken. A few drops of blood are taken from baby’s heel, collected on a special blotting paper, and sent to a laboratory on the Mainland for testing. The blood can be taken in hospital or at home. You only hear about the results if a potential disorder is detected.

To prevent discomfort for your baby during this procedure we advise you to feed your baby. We can also offer baby some sucrose according to the hospital ‘pain relief guidelines for babies’.

Hearing Test (National Screening)
Most children hear and listen from birth. They learn to talk by copying the sounds around them and the voices of their families. But that’s not true for all children. In fact, two out of every 1,000 children are born with a hearing loss. Many of these babies are healthy and have no family history of hearing loss. Hearing loss can be easily overlooked because babies and toddlers cannot tell us they are unable to hear. The first few months and years are the most important time for learning speech and language. Hearing-impaired babies who receive help early have much better chance of learning to talk and understand what people are saying than children who are not diagnosed until they are older.

For this reason, the THS offers a trained hearing screener to test your baby’s hearing while your baby is asleep or resting quietly. The screen takes about 10-20 minutes with results discussed at the end of the test and recorded in your baby’s Personal Health Record book.

Planning your discharge

Your expected length of stay is 1-2 days for a vaginal birth and approximately 2-4 days for a caesarean birth. Discharge can also occur before these times with a minimum length of stay of four hours for a vaginal birth. If your wish is to discharge against medical advice you will be required to sign a form. You will need to discuss your discharge with the midwife caring for you.

Transporting baby home

It is a legal requirement that baby travels in an approved baby car seat which should be properly fitted.

For further assistance the RACT can also be contacted on 132 722 or information viewed at www.ract.com.au/child-restraints-faq.

Pets and bringing baby home

Research has found that most animal accidents involving young children occur in the home from the family dog or cat. Children from ages 1 to 4 years are most at risk. If you have a family pet try to get the animal used to being in its own bed space, before you bring your new baby home. Don’t leave a young child alone with a dog or cat no matter how safe you feel the animal is. Some owners have their animals sleeping in/on the bed up until their baby comes home and the animals are suddenly put outside when the baby arrives home. Think about this while you are pregnant, and gradually get your pet into better habits before your new baby is brought home.

www.pets.dpi.vic.gov.au
Extended Midwifery Service (EMS)

Most women go home soon after the birth of their baby, that is between 2-3 days. Midwives are available to visit you at home to check that you and your baby are well and happy, and to answer any questions you may have, just as if you were in hospital. This excellent service is available to those who live approximately within a 30 minute drive of the hospital. If you have received your care through MGP your midwife will provide this service postnatally.

LGH: (03) 6777 8994 or 0419 882 039
North West: 0409 973 547

Breastfeeding support

LGH
Run by Lactation Consultants Monday - Friday within the first 2 weeks after discharge for anyone having problems with their feeding. For an appointment call (03) 6777 8934.

North West
Women can contact the lactation consultant on 0409 973 547 or (03) 6478 5392 anytime during their breastfeeding experience.

CHAPS on 1300 064 544.

Child Health and Parenting Service

The Child Health and Parenting Service (CHAPS) is a community-based health service that is available for children aged 0-5 and their families and follows on from hospital care after the birth of your baby.

Child and Family Health Nurses offer families the following services:

- Home visit families with new babies within 2 weeks of leaving maternity services;
- Child Health Assessments;
- Healthy kids check;
- Parenting information – infant feeding, sleep and settling and other concerns; and
- Referral to other early intervention services when necessary.

Other CHAPS activities and programs available to families

Parenting centre
Daytime centre-based and outreach services for families needing more intensive support for concerns related to parenting babies and young children e.g. sleep and settling, breastfeeding, postnatal depression, toddler behaviours and relationships.

CU@home
A home visiting program for young first time parents (15-19 years of age). The cu@home program is via referral only and starts at 28 weeks gestation and continues until the infant is 2 years old. This program is a part of the Child Health and Parenting Service (CHAPS) and is designed to support young parents in their transition to parenting and promote good health outcomes for their babies. For further information visit www.dhhs.tas.gov.au and search cu@home.

Wetaway program
For children over 5 years who want to overcome bed wetting call 1300 064 544.

Parent Line 1300 808 178
A 24 hour statewide telephone service that provides parents and carers support and information. NB: cost for local call or mobiles charges apply.

To find out the location of your nearest service telephone: 1300 064 544 or go to www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/children/child_health where you will also find further information on recommended schedule of visits, centre locations and opening hours.

Gateway Services
This is the single entry point for referral to further family and disability services throughout Tasmania.

Referral through the Gateway Service can provide access to parenting programs, intensive family support and help build better outcomes for families.

Contact: 1800 171 233
Twins and more
Multiple birth

Being a parent of twins or a further multiple is a unique and very special experience. Our aim is for you and your family to enjoy the experience through an informed journey including offering links to community support networks.

If you are a first time parent, it is beneficial that you attend a birth and parenting class prior to the multiple births sessions to ensure you have comprehensive understanding of the process of labour and birth.

For further parenting support the Tasmanian Multiple Birth Association can be contacted on 0420 588 805 or website www.tasmba.org.au

In the early weeks of any pregnancy hormone levels increase and can produce symptoms such as nausea and swinging emotions. These symptoms can be more severe in a multiple pregnancy due to the added hormone levels. The hormone relaxin which helps to prepare your pelvis for birth may also cause problems with lower back pain, you may also notice discomfort from extra weight, an increase in lower abdominal and pelvic pressure and tiredness as the pregnancy progresses, all of which can occur in any pregnancy but may be greater in a multiple pregnancy.

It is important to note that women with a multiple pregnancy can be well during this experience. Of consideration though is that women expecting more than one baby are twice as likely to experience gestational diabetes due to the increased hormones interfering with the body’s ability to process insulin. High blood pressure and a condition called pre-eclampsia can also occur more often in a multiple pregnancy.

On top of the normal schedule of visits and tests, your care will encompass an early blood test for gestational diabetes, additional antenatal visits, further appointments for ultrasounds for fetal growth and wellbeing and fetal heart monitoring.

If your babies are born prior to 36 weeks they are considered premature and may be cared for in the Neonatal and Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (NPICU) or Special Care Nursery (SCN). A multiple pregnancy has a greater possibility of not reaching 37-38 weeks gestation due to the uterus carrying more than one baby, along with the extra physical demands this brings to the pregnant woman. Most Obstetricians prefer twin pregnancies to deliver by 38 weeks for the wellbeing of both mother and babies.

Whilst in hospital you may be offered support from a Lactation Consultant as feeding more than one baby can offer different challenges than feeding just one baby. How your babies initially feed will often depend on the gestation they are born. If they are not able to breastfeed initially you will be assisted to commence expressing your breast milk as soon as possible.

If your babies are born closer to term (after 36 weeks) and are a good weight and feeding well you may be home within 3 to 5 days after the birth. Support on discharge from the Maternity Unit as with all parents is our Extended Midwifery Service and the Child Health and Parenting Service. If your babies are in SCN they will have additional follow up appointments made on discharge.

There is no doubt that parents of multiples may require more assistance in the early days of parenting. It is therefore important to utilize practical support offered from family and friends. If support is limited consider outsourcing such as childcare when the babies are a little older, a baby sitter for occasional outings or a house cleaner if financially viable. This will allow you to rest and care for yourself, time to spend with older children, and also more time to spend with your babies instead of on household chores. For information on sibings adjusting to new babies in the house got to www.raisingchildren.net.au

Gentle exercise and a good diet will help you feel well. If you feel you are not coping please ask your midwife, GP or Child Health Nurse as there is a lot of support you can access antenatally or in the community once your babies are born.

Purchasing double the equipment can be expensive. Your local multiple birth group will be happy to share information about various types of equipment they have found satisfactory. Please ensure equipment especially if purchased second hand meets Australian safety standards if required.

For further information on these standards go to www.productsafety.gov.au or www.raisingchildren.net.au

Practical tips

• Always have your nappy bag restocked and ready for outings
• Shop online or have groceries delivered
• Accept help with daily routines from family/friends
• Prioritise housework
• Freezer, microwave and dishwasher are great time savers if this is in the budget
• Limit visitors but accept help, you don’t want to have to entertain in the early days
• Connect with other families of multiples, not only will they show you that life is do-able, they can give you solid advice on how to cope.
• Sleep when babies sleep, it is a precious commodity
• Routines are good, but keep it a bit flexible, what works for one baby may not work for the other

Savour the special moments, cuddles, giggles and smiles. They grow up fast!
All THS hospitals are teaching hospitals of the University of Tasmania, and have the responsibility for teaching a wide range of students in the health care professions.

Find out more about birth and parenting

Some ways to find out more information about birth and parenting are:

- Book-in and attend Antenatal Classes.
- Ask questions at your antenatal visits.
- Browse book shops and libraries for childbirth/parenting books that interest you.

Parenting websites:

www.raisingchildren.net.au
www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au
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A final word

We at THS Maternity Services wish your family all the best for a healthy future. If you have any questions, or suggestions for improving the services we provide, including this booklet, please discuss with your Midwife. You are invited to also complete a feedback form, which can be provided for you in your area.

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If urgent assistance or advice is required contact 24 hours:

Launceston General Hospital (03) 6777 8960
Mersey Community Hospital (Latrobe/Devonport) 1800 940 766
North West Regional Hospital (Burnie) 1800 940 747
Royal Hobart Hospital Pregnancy Assessment Clinic (03) 6166 8352
Ambulance Tasmania 000

Please bring this book with you to your appointments and pack in your hospital bag.