

My choices for
Pregnancy,
Birth and Beyond





This information booklet is for everyone who is pregnant in Sussex and their partner/support person.

This booklet accompanies the information provided by your local maternity service.

Personalising your care

This is your own personal keepsake for you to keep as a record of your thoughts and choices throughout this pregnancy. It's not part of your official maternity record, but should help to spark conversations with your Midwife and others so we suggest you carry this with your handheld notes. Writing down your thoughts and preferences can help you to explore, understand and record your individual choices for pregnancy, birth and early parenthood. Your individual needs and wishes will help you plan your care and are likely to change and develop as your pregnancy progresses. You do not have to do this alone; your Midwife, Health Visitor and Obstetrician, should you need one, will support you. You can also involve partners, family and friends, the choice is yours. This is for you, whether this is your first baby or you are adding to your family. If in completing this document you identify areas where you are not sure or would like to find out more, please raise this the next time you speak to or see your Midwife, Health Visitor or Obstetrician. Once it has served its purpose, you can keep it as a reminder of the journey you have been on and to help inform your next pregnancy (if you decide to do this all over again!). Your baby will go on to have their own personal health record, otherwise known as the Red Book, which your Midwife or Health Visitor will give you.

We have divided this booklet into the following stages with suggested times to complete each section, but feel free to skip ahead – this is your plan, reflecting your choices:

- **Health and wellbeing in pregnancy (pages 6-13)**
Complete at the beginning of (or anytime during) your pregnancy
- **Your birth preferences (pages 14-22)**
Complete from 32-34 weeks of pregnancy
- **After your baby is born (pages 23-30)**
Complete from 34 weeks of pregnancy
- **Reflections on your birth experience (pages 31-33)**
Complete after your baby's birth

Your Midwife, Health Visitor and/or Doctor can help you to complete or adapt your personal care plans at any point, and you are encouraged to share your plans and preferences with them throughout pregnancy.

It is important to remember that a plan is just that – and that things may need to be reviewed and changed around your needs and the needs of your baby, to ensure care is always of high quality and safe.

How do I use this booklet?

During pregnancy we encourage you to capture your own personal birth choices, in partnership with your Midwives, Health Visitors and/or Doctors.

Keep this booklet with you throughout this journey to help conversations with your Midwife and the wider healthcare team at your appointments.

Completing these personal care plans will support you in your preferences for pregnancy, birth and parenthood.

Choosing place of birth

In Sussex you have the choice to give birth at home, in a Midwifery-led unit/birth centre or in an obstetric-led unit/labour ward. Your maternity team can support you in making this choice. You can find out more about your choice of place of birth at <https://assets.nhs.uk/prod/documents/NHSE-your-choice-where-to-have-baby-first-baby-sept2018.pdf>.



About me

My name is/I like to be known as

My pronouns are...

My due date is...

My partner/support person is...

My maternity unit is...

I intend to have my baby at... (home, in a midwife-led unit or an obstetric-led unit)

My GP's name and contact details are...

My Midwife's name and contact details are...

My Health Visitor's name and contact details are...

My named Obstetric/Midwife Consultant is...

My mental health lead's name and contact details are...



Health and wellbeing in pregnancy

For further information about health and wellbeing in pregnancy please refer to www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby and www.nhs.uk/start4life/pregnancy. You may also like to look at the Baby Buddy app available at www.nhs.uk/apps-library/baby-buddy.

Please read the content and explore the links prior to completing. Work your way through the questions at your own pace. You can show this plan to your Midwife at any time during your pregnancy. Your Midwife may also provide you with locally tailored information and resources.

Physical health and wellbeing

1. I have a long-term health condition that may affect my pregnancy...

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> diabetes | <input type="checkbox"/> hypo/hyperthyroidism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> epilepsy | <input type="checkbox"/> other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> high blood pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> none |
| <input type="checkbox"/> asthma | |

There are many conditions that may or may not have an impact on your pregnancy. Ask your GP, Doctor or Midwife about any conditions you have, or may have had in the past.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

2. I am aware of the need to discuss pre-existing medical conditions and/or special requirements with my GP, Midwife or Doctor prior to becoming pregnant or in early pregnancy...

- I have discussed my pre-existing medical condition/s with my maternity team
- I require further support with my medical condition/s or special needs
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

3. I am taking the following medication and/or supplements...

- I am aware of the recommendations and I have discussed this with my GP, Doctor or Midwife
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

It is recommended that you take folic acid supplements before conception and up until 12 weeks of pregnancy. It is also recommended that you take Vitamin D supplements throughout pregnancy. Any other medications should be discussed and reviewed with your team.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

4. I have additional requirements...

- I will need help at appointments to translate into my language
- I have allergies and/or special dietary requirements
- I have religious beliefs and customs that I would like to be observed
- I/my partner have additional needs
- I/my partner have previous birth experiences we would like to discuss

If you have any special requirements, please tell your maternity team as early as possible. Use of interpreting services vary depending on local policy and availability, please discuss with your Midwife.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

5. I am aware that it is recommended to have both the flu vaccine and whooping cough vaccine during pregnancy...

- I am aware of the reasons for having a flu vaccine during pregnancy – further information is available at www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/flu-jab
- I am aware of the reasons for having a whooping cough vaccine during pregnancy - further information is available at www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/whooping-cough-vaccination
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

Lifestyle and wellbeing

6. I am aware that I should avoid some foods whilst pregnant, as they can cause harm to me and my unborn baby...

- I am aware of what foods to avoid in pregnancy
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

Recommendations change about which foods to avoid, please refer to the NHS website to get the latest information www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/foods-to-avoid-pregnant

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

7. I am aware that I should try to maintain a healthy and balanced diet in pregnancy...

- I am aware of my nutritional needs in pregnancy
- I have specific circumstances that affect my dietary requirements and I would like guidance from my maternity team
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

You may be eligible for Healthy Start vouchers – find out more at www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

8. I am aware of the benefits of light to moderate exercise in pregnancy...

- I am aware of the recommendations about exercise
- I have a condition that affects my ability to exercise and I would like guidance from my maternity team
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pregnancy-exercise

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

9. I am aware that, for the health and wellbeing of me and my baby, I am advised not to smoke, drink alcohol or use recreational drugs in pregnancy...

- I am currently smoking and would like to hear about the help and support I can get to stop for pregnancy www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/smoking-pregnant
- My partner is smoking and I would like them to have help and support to stop
- I am aware of advice around the consumption of alcohol and recreational/illegal drugs
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

You can talk to your Midwife or Doctor for support with quitting smoking, drinking alcohol or taking recreational/illegal drugs.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

Emotional health and wellbeing

Expecting a baby can be a joyful and exciting time, however it is also common to experience anxiety, depression or emotional distress. This tool may be helpful www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/mental-health-during-and-after-pregnancy/wellbeing-plan

10. I have/had a mental health condition that may affect my pregnancy...

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> anxiety | <input type="checkbox"/> schizoaffective disorder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> depression | <input type="checkbox"/> schizophrenia or any other psychotic illness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) | <input type="checkbox"/> postpartum psychosis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> eating disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> history of trauma – childhood or adult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> post-traumatic stress disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> any other mental health condition for which you have seen a Psychiatrist or other mental health professional |
| <input type="checkbox"/> personality disorder | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bipolar affective disorder (also known as manic depression or mania) | |

If you have any of these conditions, please speak to your Midwife or Doctor as soon as possible as you may benefit from the support of a specialist perinatal mental health practitioner.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

11. This is how I'm feeling at the moment...

Write down any concerns or worries you have, and talk to your friends, family, Midwife, Health Visitor, GP or Doctor.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

12. I am aware that getting to know my baby during my pregnancy will help to build strong parental relationships, as well as helping with my emotional wellbeing. I might try...

- talking, singing or playing music to my unborn baby
- gently massaging my bump
- pregnancy yoga and/or hypnobirthing
- using an app to track my baby's growth and development
- reading UNICEF's 'building a happy baby guide' www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/relationship-building-resources/building-a-happy-baby

Doing these simple things regularly is known to release a hormone called oxytocin, a hormone which can help your baby's brain to develop and makes you feel good.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

13. I am aware of things I can do to enhance my emotional wellbeing...

- taking regular gentle exercise, such as pregnancy yoga, walking or swimming
- ensuring I eat well
- trying relaxation techniques, listening to music, meditation or breathing exercises
- taking time for myself, somewhere I can relax
- talking to someone I trust – friend, family, Midwife, Health Visitor, GP or Doctor
- asking for practical help with household chores or other children

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

14. Specialist support for anxiety and depression or any other mental health condition is available...

- I am aware of how to access mental health support if I need it whilst pregnant
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

If you feel that you need some emotional support, you can speak to your Midwife or Health Visitor, or you can refer yourself to your local talking therapies. They are free and pregnancy is prioritised.

See: [www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies\(IAPT\)/LocationSearch/10008](http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies(IAPT)/LocationSearch/10008)

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

15. Emotions my partner or support person and I should look out for in each other include...

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> tearfulness | <input type="checkbox"/> being so afraid of birth that I don't want to go through with it |
| <input type="checkbox"/> feeling overwhelmed | <input type="checkbox"/> having unpleasant thoughts that I can't control or keep coming back |
| <input type="checkbox"/> feeling irritable or arguing more often | <input type="checkbox"/> suicidal feelings or thoughts of self harm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> difficulty concentrating | <input type="checkbox"/> repeating actions or developing strict rituals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> change in appetite | <input type="checkbox"/> lack of feeling towards my unborn baby |
| <input type="checkbox"/> problems sleeping or extreme energy | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> racing thoughts | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> feeling very anxious | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> loss of interest in things I normally like | |

If you are worried by any of these feelings, talk to your Midwife or Doctor.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

Baby's health and wellbeing

16. I am aware that if I notice a change in my baby's movements, I should contact my Midwife immediately...

- I have an idea of when to expect to start feeling my baby moving
- I understand why movement matters
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

Further information is available at www.kickscount.org.uk and www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/pregnancy-symptom-checker/baby-fetal-movements

My thoughts, feelings and questions:



Personalised birth preferences

Your birth preferences support you (and your birth partner/s or support person) to make informed decisions about your care in labour. Sharing your preferences with your care providers enables them to personalise the care they give you. One of the most important emotional preparations is flexibility and preparing for multiple scenarios, rather than one fixed plan. Further information about choice of place of birth can be found at www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/where-can-i-give-birth

It is important to remember that your birth plan is personal to you. It depends on multiple factors, including what you would like, your medical history, your personal circumstances and what is available at your maternity service. What may be safe and practical for one person may not be safe and practical for another.

Please read the content and explore the links prior to completing. Work your way through the questions at your own pace. You can show this plan to your Midwife from 34 weeks onwards.

1. I would prefer to give birth...

- at home in a birth centre
 in a labour ward I prefer to wait and see
 I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

Certain option(s) might be recommended for you based on your personal health and pregnancy.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

2. My birth partner(s) or support person(s) will be...

It is recommended that no more than two people act as your birth partners in labour at any one time.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

3. Student midwives/doctors may be working with the team when I have my baby...

- I am happy for a student to be present during my labour/birth
 I prefer that no students are present during my labour/birth
 I prefer to wait and see
 I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

Students learn by working closely alongside their named midwife mentor and will provide you with care and support with your consent under direct supervision at all times.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

4. I have additional requirements...

- I will need help at appointments to translate into my language
 I have allergies and/or special dietary requirements
 I have religious beliefs and customs that I would like to be observed
 I/my partner have additional needs

If you have any special requirements, please tell your maternity team as early as possible. Use of interpreting services vary depending on local policy and availability, please discuss with your Midwife.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

5. I have had a discussion with my Midwife/Obstetrician about how I would like to give birth, my thoughts and feelings are...

The majority of pregnancies end in a vaginal birth, however for some a caesarean birth may be recommended.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

If you are having a planned caesarean birth please go to question 15

6. I am aware that, in some circumstances, my Midwife or Obstetrician may offer to help my labour get started (this is known as induction of labour)...

- I am aware of why an induction might be recommended
 I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

There are a number of reasons for offering induction of labour and if this is something that may be required, this will be planned carefully with you and your Midwife/Doctor. Further information can be found at www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG70

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

7. During labour and birth I would consider the following coping strategies/pain relief...

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to avoid all pain relief | <input type="checkbox"/> paracetamol/codeine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> self-hypnosis/hypnobirthing | <input type="checkbox"/> oral morphine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> aromatherapy/homeopathy/reflexology | <input type="checkbox"/> pethidine/diamorphine/meptid (opioid injection) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> water (bath or birthing pool) | <input type="checkbox"/> epidural |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TENS machine (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to wait and see |
| <input type="checkbox"/> gas and air (entonox) | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not sure/would like to find out more |

Your options for pain relief will depend on where you plan to give birth. Further information is available at www.labourpains.com/home. Discuss with your Midwife and ask what options are available to you at your local maternity unit.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

8. During labour and birth I would consider...

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> massage | <input type="checkbox"/> a bed, for rest – propped up with pillows or whilst lying on my side |
| <input type="checkbox"/> walking/standing | <input type="checkbox"/> music to be played (which I will provide) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> different upright positions such as all fours/squatting/kneeling | <input type="checkbox"/> the lights dimmed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a birthing ball | <input type="checkbox"/> my birth partner or support person taking photographs/filming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bean bags, birth stools and birth couches if available | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to wait and see |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a birthing pool | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not sure/I would like to find out more |

Your circumstances in labour may influence what choices are available to you. Please discuss this with your Midwife at 34-40 weeks.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

9. During labour and birth, I am aware that it is recommended that my baby's heartbeat is monitored...

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> If needed, I prefer to have intermittent fetal heart rate monitoring with a handheld device | <input type="checkbox"/> If I need continuous monitoring I would like to be mobile and use wireless monitoring if available |
| <input type="checkbox"/> If needed, I prefer to have continuous fetal heart rate monitoring using a CTG machine | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not wish to have monitoring |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to wait and see |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not sure/I would like to find out more |

You can learn more about fetal monitoring on the NHS website www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/what-happens-during-labour-and-birth.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

10. I am aware that, during labour, my Midwife and/or Obstetrician are likely to recommend vaginal examinations to assess the progress of my labour...

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am aware of why vaginal examinations are part of routine care | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am very worried about having vaginal examinations | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to wait and see | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am not sure/I would like to find out more | <input type="checkbox"/> Information provided |

Vaginal examinations are a routine part of assessing labour progress and will not be undertaken without your consent.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

11. I am aware that, in some circumstances, my Midwife or Obstetrician may offer interventions to assist with my labour...

- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am aware of why assistance/intervention might be recommended |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I do not want to have any intervention in labour and would like to discuss this before labour to ensure my wishes are respected |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am not sure/I would like to find out more |
- Interventions may be recommended if your labour slows down, or if there are concerns with you or your baby's health.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

12. I am aware that, in some circumstances, my Obstetrician may recommend an assisted (instrumental) or caesarean birth...

- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I understand why an assisted birth might be recommended |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am not sure/I would like to find out more |

An assisted or caesarean birth may be recommended if it is thought to be the safest way to deliver your baby; your Obstetrician will discuss this with you and ask for your consent before any procedure is undertaken.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

13. I am aware that, in some circumstances, my Midwife or Obstetrician may recommend a cut to the perineum to facilitate birth (episiotomy)...

- I understand why an episiotomy might be recommended
- I prefer to avoid an episiotomy, but would give my consent at the time if it was required
- I do not consent to episiotomy under any circumstances and would like to discuss this before labour to ensure my wishes are respected
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

An episiotomy may be recommended for an instrumental birth or if your Midwife/Doctor is concerned that your baby needs to be born quickly. Your Midwife/Doctor will always ask for your consent.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:



14. I am aware that, after my baby is born, I will give birth to the placenta (this is known as the third stage of labour). There are two ways this can happen...

- I would like to have a natural (physiological) third stage, the cord is left intact and I push the placenta out myself
- I would like to have an active third stage, where the cord is cut within a few minutes, I receive an injection of oxytocin, and the Midwife/Doctor delivers my placenta
- I prefer to wait and see
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more
- I/my birth partner or support person would like to cut the umbilical cord
- I prefer the Midwife/Doctor to cut the umbilical cord

Your Midwife or Doctor may offer an active third stage due to your personal circumstances and will discuss this with you at the time of birth.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

15. I am aware that skin-to-skin contact with my baby, immediately after birth, is recommended...

www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/implementing-standards-resources/skin-to-skin-contact

- I understand why skin-to-skin contact is recommended
- I would like immediate skin-to-skin contact
- I prefer to wait and see
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

As long as you and your baby are both well, skin-to-skin can be done following any type of birth. Your partner or support person can also have skin-to-skin contact with your baby.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

16. I am aware that I will be provided with support to feed my baby, my thoughts around feeding are...

During pregnancy you will have a chance to discuss how you wish to feed your baby. A Midwife will help you to get feeding off to a good start.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

17. I am aware that, after the baby is born, they will be offered Vitamin K...

- I would like my baby to have Vitamin K by injection
- I would like my baby to have Vitamin K by oral drops
- I do not want my baby to have Vitamin K
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more

Vitamin K is a supplement that is recommended for all babies that prevents a rare condition known as Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding (VKDB). It has no known side effects.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:



After your baby is born

Much of the information you need will be provided by your Midwife and Health Visitor, but you can also access information on any of the following websites:

www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/labour-and-birth/after-the-birth

www.nhs.uk/start4life/baby

www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/support-for-parents

www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/after-birth

We recommend you revisit these pages after your baby is born and share any thoughts and questions with your postnatal maternity and health visiting teams.

Developing a relationship with your baby

1. I am aware of UNICEF's 'Meeting your baby for the first time' video
<https://youtu.be/0vzW9qPz3So>

- I have watched UNICEF's video
- I have not watched UNICEF's video
- I am not sure/would like to know more
- Information provided

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

2. I am aware that skin-to-skin contact with my baby after birth and beyond is recommended...

www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/implementing-standards-resources/skin-to-skin-contact

- I am aware of the benefits of skin-to-skin contact
 I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

3. I am aware that I will be given information about infant feeding and how to get it off to a good start...

- I am aware of the benefits of breastfeeding
 I am aware of how to get feeding off to a good start
 I am aware I will receive support with feeding
 I am aware of how to safely prepare formula
 I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

4. I am aware that my baby may show early signs that they might be ready to feed...

- I am aware of the signs to look out for that my baby might be ready to feed
 I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

Further information can be found at www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

Preparing for the first few hours and days after birth

5. I am aware that my maternity unit may not be able to facilitate my birth partner or support person being able to stay with me in all areas...

- I am aware of my maternity unit's local policy on birth partner(s) or support person staying with me
 I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

Ask your Midwife for information on your local maternity unit.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

6. I am aware that visiting hours at my maternity unit can vary...

- I have checked visiting times and I am aware of when and who can visit me after giving birth
 I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

It's useful to find out visiting times, particularly if you might have visitors travelling from a long distance.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

7. I am aware that my length of stay could vary depending on my recovery from the birth.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

8. I am aware that my baby may need to stay longer in hospital if they need additional support on the neonatal unit.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

9. I am beginning to think about having things ready at home...

Think about what things you could do now to make caring for yourself and your baby easier at home.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

10. I am beginning to think about who will be able to support me after giving birth when at home...

Your partner, friends or family, it's worth considering who will be able to help you at home.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

Your physical and emotional wellbeing after birth

You may find the following information helpful
www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/you-after-birth

11. I can be prepared for my physical recovery after giving birth in order to help to get me and my new family off to the best start. I am aware of...

- physical changes to expect
- pelvic floor exercises
- postnatal pain relief options
- physical recovery after a caesarean birth
- the importance of hand hygiene
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more
- signs of infection and what to do
- Information provided

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

12. I am aware that giving birth and becoming a parent is known to be a time of great emotional change, and that I can prepare for how I might feel after birth...

- I am aware of the emotional changes to be expected
- I have considered what my family/friends can do to support me
- I know how to access support with my emotional and mental health after giving birth
- I am not sure/I would like to find out more Information provided

13. Changes in thoughts, feelings and/or behaviours I or my partner should look out for...

- persistent sadness/low mood
- difficulty bonding with my baby
- lack of energy/feeling overly tired
- problems sleeping or extreme energy
- feeling unable to look after my baby
- loss of interest in things I normally like
- problems concentrating or making decisions
- having unpleasant thoughts that I can't control or keep coming back
- changes in appetite
- suicidal feelings or thoughts of self-harm
- feelings of guilt, hopelessness or self-blame
- repeating actions or developing strict rituals

Please take the time to share this list with your birth partner or support person and close family as they are often the first to spot that you are becoming unwell. Both you and your partner can access support from your local talking therapies services, details of which can be found at www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-psychological-therapies-service

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

Caring for your baby

You may find the following information useful during the first few weeks of looking after your baby

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/being-a-parent

<http://iconcope.org/parentsadvice>

14. I am aware of things to consider before going home, including...

- BCG vaccination (if you have been told that your baby needs it)
- how to tell if your baby is feeding well
- signs of an unwell baby and what to do if you're worried
- changes to expect in your baby's nappy

The team in your maternity unit will be on hand to provide support and can arrange access to additional treatment if needed.

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

15. I am aware of things to consider for when I am at home, including...

- safe sleeping practices (sudden infant death syndrome prevention)
www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice
- newborn jaundice – what's normal, and what might need review
- newborn blood spot screening test
www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/newborn-screening/blood-spot-test
- newborn hearing screen test
www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/newborn-screening/hearing-test
- umbilical cord care and skin care
- bathing your baby

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

Community care and next steps

16. Community postnatal care is delivered in a variety of settings and by a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals. I am aware of...

- community postnatal care
- how to contact my local community Midwives
- how to contact my Health Visitor who will offer to visit me at home within a couple of weeks of the birth
- how to access additional infant feeding support
- how to access services in my local Children's Centres
- I am not sure/I would like to know more Information provided

Further information about the role of your Health Visitor can be found here:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/baby-reviews

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

17. After the birth, I will need to...

- register my baby's birth within six weeks
- register my baby with my GP
- book a postnatal check with my GP at six to eight weeks after the birth for both me and my baby.
- arrange for further tests at my GP surgery (if recommended by my Midwife or Doctor)

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

18. I am aware that, if I have a pre-existing medical condition or if I was unwell around the time of the birth, I may have specific medical recommendations made by my Doctor...

- I have a pre-existing medical condition and I have discussed my specific postnatal care requirements with my Doctor and Midwife
- I experienced complications/was unwell around the birth, I am aware of the implications this may have on my postnatal care
- I am not sure/I would like to know more Information provided

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

19. I am aware that if I have any concerns about my own health and recovery, I can speak to my Midwife, Health Visitor or GP...

- I know how to support my own recovery from vaginal birth or caesarean section
- I have an idea of signs that may indicate any problems with recovery, e.g. raised temperature
- I am not sure/I would like to know more Information provided

My thoughts, feelings and questions:



My reflections

Thoughts about your pregnancy and birth to discuss with your Midwife or Doctor

Use the space below to reflect on your experience of pregnancy, labour, birth and immediately after birth. This can include emotional and physical experiences. If you have specific concerns, share them with your Midwife, Health Visitor or Doctor.

For further information, you may find the following websites helpful:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/you-after-birth

www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/perinatal where you will find information regarding talking therapies, as well as the specialist perinatal mental health service.

1. In pregnancy...

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

2. Around labour and birth...

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

3. After the birth of my baby...

My thoughts, feelings and questions:

It can be helpful to review events around pregnancy and birth. All maternity units have a birth reflection/listening service that can be accessed at any time after giving birth or when you return for subsequent pregnancies. Ask your Midwife or Health Visitor how to access this service at your maternity unit. If you feel you have any concerns around your care, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) at your hospital. There is no time limit on when you can do this.

You can keep this booklet after your baby is born, you may find it is a useful record of your choices and preferences, and it may help and support you in any future pregnancy.

Notes:

You can keep a record of which personal care plans you have completed, and when:

Health and wellbeing in pregnancy

Date completed

Your birth preferences

Date completed

After your baby is born

Date completed

Reflections on your birth experience

Date completed



Your local labour unit telephone number is:



Reminder to call 999 in an emergency and 111 for general queries and support.

If your life is at risk right now please:

- call 999 for an ambulance
- go straight to A&E, if you can
- or call your local crisis team.

If you can keep yourself safe for a short while but still need urgent advice please call:

- NHS 111
- contact your GP surgery and ask for an emergency appointment or call your GP's out of hours service.

If you need to talk things through you can:

- call Samaritans on 116 123
- text SHOUT to 85258
- call NHS 111

This booklet was initially developed by the North West London Collaboration of Clinical Commissioning Groups as part of the maternity early adopters project. It has been further developed by the Sussex Local Maternity System, with thanks.

Publication date: March 2021

Review date: September 2021

Sussex Local Maternity System