

APPOINTMENTS

Usually you will go to 10 appointments during pregnancy, unless you have had a baby or babies before then you might go to around 8 appointments if your pregnancy is low risk and you are healthy.

GOING TO YOUR APPOINTMENTS IS IMPORTANT

Going to your appointments gives the midwife the opportunity to get to know you and what is important to you about your pregnancy and labour and birth. It gives you the chance to ask questions and become familiar with the hospital and the people caring for you.

WHERE TO GO FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

Your appointments usually happen in the Outpatients department at the hospital or at a community clinic run by the hospital. If you are seeing a family doctor it will happen at their clinic.

TESTS DURING PREGNANCY

You may be offered some tests to monitor the health of you and your baby. If you are not sure what test is being offered, please ask. You should never be told you HAVE to have a test, you always have a choice. If you need an interpreter please ask for one.

HOW LONG IS MY APPOINTMENT?

The longest appointment is often the first one, that is called the Booking in appointment [always at the hospital] - that may take 2 hours. Other appointments, sometimes called review appointments usually take about 30 minutes depending on the hospital. Make sure you arrive on time for your appointment.

WHO WILL I SEE?

Most of the time the appointment will be with a midwife, unless you or your baby have some health issues then it may be with a doctor.

WHAT WILL THEY DO?

They will do your blood pressure at every appointment.

At around 20-22 weeks they feel your pregnant belly, measure from your pubic bone to the top of your uterus [to monitor the growth of the baby] and listen to the baby's heartbeat using a doppler. A normal rate for the baby's heartbeat is 110 to 160 beats per minute. After about 33 weeks the midwife or doctor will use their hands to check the position of the baby.

They will ask you if you are feeling your baby move. This is an important question as that is the best way to tell if the baby is well. You must always tell them if you think your baby's pattern of movement has changed.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

When you go to your appointment you might want to ask some questions:

- how far along is my pregnancy?
- what is normal for this stage of pregnancy?
- what is that test for?
- how many support people can I have during my birth?
- is there a bath I can use for pain relief during labour?

THINGS TO CONSIDER

What models of care are available at the hospital you have booked into.

The kind of labour you would like - natural without drugs, or using drugs for pain relief.

What to include in a birth plan, or preference list.

What kind of tests will be offered during pregnancy, what are they for and what are the risks involved.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Find out what models of care are offered at the hospital you are going to.

Ask what model of care you are in, and ask to change if you want to be in another model.

Write down questions to ask your midwife or doctor.

Make sure you have good support during pregnancy and for labour and birth and after the baby is born.

RESCHEDULING YOUR APPOINTMENT

Remember to cancel or reschedule your appointment if you are not able to attend. Call the antenatal clinic for help.

RESOURCES

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/pregnancy/health-wellbeing/tests-appointments/appointments-during-pregnancy>

<https://www.thewomens.org.au/patients-visitors/clinics-and-services/pregnancy-birth/pregnancy-appointments-what-to-expect>

<https://www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/antenatal-care>

DISCLAIMER

This information is not intended to be medical advice, it is a guide only. Please ask your midwife or doctor for information and advice directly related to your care and your baby's care.