

WHO MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN YOUR PREGNANCY CARE

There are many people in different professions that may provide care to you during your pregnancy, labour and birth or after the baby is born.

Here some of them are described to help you have a better understanding of their roles during your care.

MIDWIFE

A Midwife is a clinician that will provide care at every labour & birth, they are qualified and registered as a Midwife, a profession in its own right. A birth may occur in the presence of a midwife, without an obstetrician present where the birth progresses without any problems.

Midwives will also provide care during your pregnancy and after your baby is born. You may also receive a visit at home [after the baby is born] from a midwife.

OBSTETRICIAN

An obstetrician is a doctor who has completed extensive training and is a specialist doctor in complex pregnancy & birth. If you have any complications during your pregnancy or birth, an obstetrician will be involved in your care as well as a midwife.

ANAESTHETIST

An anaesthetist is a doctor who has completed extensive training and is a specialist responsible for providing pain relief such as epidurals, to relieve the pain during labour. They are also present for operations and procedures to provide anaesthetic and pain relief.

PAEDIATRICIAN OR NEONATAL DOCTOR

A paediatrician or neonatal doctor is a doctor who is trained to provide specialist care to babies and/or young children who are unwell. A paediatrician or neonatal doctor might be at your birth if the midwife has concerns about the health of your baby.

If your baby is in the nursery because they are unwell, a paediatrician or neonatal doctor will provide care to them.

STUDENTS

All maternity hospitals in metropolitan Melbourne are teaching hospitals. This means that there are often students on placement that may ask to be involved in your care. They may be medical students, midwifery students, nursing students or from other disciplines like physiotherapy and social work. Clinical placement is an important part of the students' learning, they can be nervous but also very caring. The midwife or doctor caring for you should ask you if it is okay if a student is working with them to provide your care.

OTHERS WHO MAY BE INVOLVED

There may also be others involved in your care either in the community or in clinics in the hospital. The care may be related to your social situation – social worker; your housing situation – housing worker [outside of the hospital in the community]; your health – physiotherapist, diabetes educator/endocrinologist, dietician etc; and specialist clinics [during pregnancy]

DOULA SUPPORT

A Doula is someone who has completed training to provide emotional and physical support during pregnancy, labour and birth and the postnatal period. They do not provide any clinical or medical care.

MIDWIFERY STUDENT SUPPORT

Midwifery students provide free support to women as part of their Midwifery training. They must support a minimum of 10 women during their course, this is called the Continuity of Care Experience [CCE]. The student must attend a minimum of four antenatal appointments with the woman, be on call for labour and birth, and attend a minimum of two appointments after the baby is born.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Are you a midwife or a doctor?
- Will you be my main care provider during pregnancy or birth?
- Why do I need to see a doctor?
- Why does my baby need to see a doctor?
- If I don't want an epidural, will I need to see a doctor?
- Do you know how I can get a doula for support?
- Do you know how I can get a midwifery student for support?

RESOURCES

- <https://www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/health-professionals-involved-in-your-pregnancy>
- <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/servicesandsupport/whos-who-during-pregnancy-birth-and-newborn-care>
- <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/servicesandsupport/pregnancy-and-birth-care-options>
- <https://www.thewomens.org.au/health-information/pregnancy-and-birth/now-you-are-pregnant/pregnancy-care-birthing-options>

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.