

# At home with your baby

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## Postnatal information leaflet for parents

### Congratulations on the birth of your baby

Many new parents are anxious about caring for their baby at home. This leaflet is an information guide to our service, which aims to support you during this special time.

### Leaving hospital/Midwife-Led Unit (MLU)/staying at home after a home birth

The midwife will give you your postnatal notes and a variety of information leaflets and contact numbers. Please make sure you have your notes before you leave the hospital, and that staff know which address you are being discharged to.

### Child Health Record book ('the red book')

Soon after the birth of your baby you will be given a personal Child Health Record book for your baby. This is a way of keeping track of your baby's progress. Your baby's details at birth are recorded and their first examination. Your baby's weight and immunisations are recorded, as well as other details about childhood illnesses and milestones.

Information about the screening tests offered to your baby (for example newborn and six to eight week infant physical examination and hearing tests) can be found in the **Screening tests for you and your baby** leaflet (see **Further information** on page 5).

### When and where will I see a midwife?

The community midwife will offer a combination of home visits and telephone calls tailored to you and your baby's needs. In some areas you may be seen in a postnatal clinic for your care.

The visits will usually take place between 9am and 5pm. Ideally a community midwife known to you will visit you. If you have not had your first visit from the community midwife by 3pm, please contact the Maternity Liaison Office, or your nearest maternity unit or day care centre (telephone numbers are listed on page 6).



## What can I expect from my community midwife?

Your midwife will ask you about your health and wellbeing, and that of your baby. They will offer information and guidance on the following.

- The expected normal recovery from childbirth
- A range of commonly experienced health concerns after birth, for example tiredness, perineal discomfort, and mood changes.
- How to assess your baby's general health and where to get help, if needed.
- Feeding your baby.
- All aspects of baby care, for example skin and cord care.
- Contraception.

As part of the assessment of you and your baby's health the midwife will generally carry out a physical examination, for example undressing your baby and checking healing if you have any stitches. The midwife is able to discuss your birth experience with you and can answer any questions you may have about your care during labour and birth.

## Newborn Blood Spot Screening ('Heel Prick Test')

This is carried out by the midwife with your consent, between five and eight days after birth. This simple blood test identifies babies who may have rare but serious conditions. Most babies screened will not have any of the conditions but for those who do, early treatment can improve their health and prevent severe disability or even death.

Further information can be found in the **Newborn Blood Spot Screening** or **Screening tests for you and your baby** leaflets (see **Further information** on page 5).

## If you need a midwife and you are not being visited

If you are not expecting a visit or telephone call from your midwife but you have concerns and need to speak to them, please do not hesitate to phone their mobile phone. If the midwife is not available, please phone the Maternity Liaison Office on 01227 86 41 52 and they will get in touch with a midwife for you.

The Maternity Liaison Office is open between 9am and 3:15pm Monday to Sunday. At other times you are able to leave a message.

## Caring for yourself

It is important to look after yourself. Sometimes there seems to be no time to eat or sleep but if you do not take care of yourself you will end up run down and exhausted. Further information can be found on the NHS web site (see **Further information** on page 5).

You may feel tearful, anxious, or sad (this is often called baby blues). Your midwife should discuss this with you. Baby blues is common and the symptoms often go away on their own. If you or your family notice changes in your mood or emotions that last longer than a couple of weeks, let your midwife or health visitor know.

In the immediate days after having a baby there is increased chance of infection in the vaginal area, and very occasionally this can lead to the life threatening infectious illness **sepsis**. It is important therefore, to wash your hands **both before and after** going to the toilet or changing your sanitary pads. This is especially necessary when you or someone close to you amongst your family or friends has a sore throat or an upper respiratory infection.

## Concerns about you and your new baby

If you have any of the following concerns about yours or your baby's health, **you should contact your midwife, GP, or local maternity unit immediately. You can contact your nearest maternity unit (telephone numbers are listed on page 6) any time of the day or night.**

Concerns about your health	
Symptoms to watch out for	What this could mean
Feel unwell, with a high temperature with or without shivers	infection
Very heavy vaginal bleeding or pass blood clots	haemorrhage
Smelly vaginal discharge	infection
Dizziness, fainting, breathlessness, palpitations, or chest pain	a blood clot or anaemia
Severe abdominal (tummy) pain	infection or haemorrhage
Visual disturbances	raised blood pressure
Nausea (feeling sick) or vomiting	raised blood pressure
Pain in one of your calves	a blood clot in your leg
Severe anxiety, paranoia, extreme depression, or bizarre thoughts	postnatal mental illness

(Or your relatives have noticed any of the above changes in your behaviour).

## Concerns about your baby

- If your baby is not feeding
- If your baby is not having wet nappies
- If your baby does not have a bowel motion (done a poo) for more than 24 hours
- If your baby is 'floppy', difficult to wake, and difficult to feed
- If your baby is jaundiced (yellow colouring of the skin) and is sleepy and not feeding
- If there are any blisters on your baby's skin
- If your baby has a high pitched cry that continues and you are unable to settle him/her

### Dial 999 and ask for an ambulance if your baby:

- stops breathing, goes blue, or changes colour
- is unresponsive and shows no awareness of what is going on
- has glazed eyes and does not focus on anything
- cannot be woken
- has a fit, even if the baby recovers without medical attention.

## Children's Hospital Services

After your baby is born, if your midwife or GP has any concerns about your baby, you may be asked to bring them to one of the Children's Day Assessment Units.

- **Dolphin Ward**, Children's Ambulatory Unit, Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury (open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday only)
- **Padua Ward**, William Harvey Hospital, Ashford
- **Rainbow Ward**, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital, Margate

Children's Hospital Services which are open 24 hours a day are only available at William Harvey Hospital, Ashford and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital, Margate.

## Caring for your baby

Information about caring for your baby (for example sleeping, crying, bathing, and feeding your baby) can be found on the NHS website (see **Further information**). Information about reducing the risk of cot death (sleeping position, temperature, smoking) can be found in the **Safer sleep for babies leaflet** (see **Further information** on page 5).

## Discharge from midwifery care

Between 10 and 28 days after you have given birth, your midwife will discharge you to the care of the health visitor. The health visitor will continue to support you and monitor your baby's wellbeing. They will also give you information about your baby's immunisations, local mother and baby groups, and baby clinics. Your local children's centre may also offer baby groups and baby massage.

It is advised that you register your baby with the GP of your choice as early as possible. You will need to register your baby's birth before they are six weeks old. You will not be able to claim child benefit until your baby is registered.

It is recommended that you arrange a postnatal appointment with your GP surgery between six and eight weeks after giving birth, to check that you are fully recovered from the birth.

## Birth Afterthoughts

If at any time you have any **concerns or unanswered questions about the birth of your baby** which you wish to discuss confidentially with a midwife, please contact the Maternity Liaison Office. Tell them that you wish to arrange an appointment to speak to a midwife from 'Birth Afterthoughts'.

- **Maternity Liaison Office**  
Telephone: 01227 86 41 52 between 9am and 3:15pm  
Email: [ekh-tr.birthafterthoughts@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.birthafterthoughts@nhs.net)

## Maternity Voices Partnership

Have you considered sharing your views or ideas on how to improve our maternity services locally? If interested and you would like to join the local maternity user groups, please contact the Maternity Liaison Office at Kent and Canterbury Hospital on 01227 86 41 52.

## Further information

- **NICE Postnatal care up to 8 weeks after birth. 2015**  
Web: [www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg37](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg37)
- **Screening tests for you and your baby (including translations)**  
Web: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/screening-tests-for-you-and-your-baby](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/screening-tests-for-you-and-your-baby)
- **Safer Sleep for Babies: Lullaby Trust**  
Web: [www.lullabytrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Safer-sleep-for-babies-a-guide-for-parents-web.pdf](http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Safer-sleep-for-babies-a-guide-for-parents-web.pdf)
- **Baby Sleep Info Source (Basis)**  
Web: [www.basionline.org.uk/](http://www.basionline.org.uk/)
- **BesideYou: breastfeeding support in Kent and Medway**  
Web: [www.wearebesideyou.co.uk](http://www.wearebesideyou.co.uk)
- **Family Planning Association**  
Web: [www.fpa.org.uk/](http://www.fpa.org.uk/)
- **NHS: pregnancy**  
Web: [www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/#close](http://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/#close)
- **Best beginnings**  
Web: [www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/fbtb-introduction](http://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/fbtb-introduction)
- **Maternity Voices Partnership: Pregnancy Birth East Kent: a page run by mums and dads**  
Web: [www.pregnancybirtheastkent.com](http://www.pregnancybirtheastkent.com)
- **Kent County Council: contraception and sexual health clinics**  
Web: [www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/sexual-health/contraception](http://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/sexual-health/contraception)

## Maternity Units contact details

- Canterbury Maternity Day Care Centre, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury  
Telephone: 01227 78 31 05
- Dover Maternity Day Care Centre, **Buckland Hospital**, Dover  
Telephone: 01304 22 25 23
- **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital**, Margate
  - Kingsgate Ward Telephone: 01843 23 45 86
  - St Peter's Midwife Led Unit Telephone: 01843 23 51 00
- **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford
  - Folkestone Ward Telephone: 01233 61 66 28
  - Singleton Midwife Led Unit Telephone: 01233 65 18 68

**This leaflet has been produced with and for women and their families**

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site [www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation](http://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation)