

Leaflet for pregnant women in the Region of Southern Denmark

Pregnancy, childbirth and maternity



Congratulations on your pregnancy

Pregnancy

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The Region of Southern Denmark has prepared this leaflet to describe the services the region provides for women and their partners during pregnancy, childbirth and maternity. It is intended as a supplement to the oral information and the area-specific leaflets you receive from the healthcare personnel you meet during pregnancy, childbirth and maternity.

Pregnancy

When you become pregnant, the local authority offers a process adapted to suit your wishes and needs. Generally speaking, it will comprise the following:

- Three examinations by your GP
- Between five and seven appointments with a midwife
- Examinations at the hospital, including two ultrasound scans
- Classes to prepare you for childbirth and parenthood

Examinations by your GP

At the first pregnancy examination by your GP - around 6-10 weeks into your pregnancy - you will be asked to choose which midwife clinic you wish to use. The Region of Southern Denmark operates midwifery clinics located throughout the region, and it would be most practical for you to select the one closest to your home or workplace. In good time before your due date, you will also need to decide at which hospital you want to deliver your child, or whether you prefer to give birth at home.

Once you have chosen the midwife clinic you wish to attend, your GP will send your pregnancy chart and pregnancy records to the hospital and to your midwife.

You will also be given a copy of your pregnancy chart.

Your pregnancy chart

Your pregnancy chart is used to track your condition throughout your pregnancy, so you will need to bring it with you to all appointments with your GP, the midwife and the hospital. You must also make sure to have it with you when you go into labour. Your pregnancy chart presents an overview of how your pregnancy is progressing and contains information such as your weight, your blood pressure, how the foetus is developing and, if appropriate, special requests and professional comments.

Appointments with your midwife

Once the midwife has received the paperwork from your GP, she will invite you to your first appointment. This will be the first of 5-7 appointments, depending on your individual needs.

You will receive a letter stating the date and time of your first appointment with your midwife. Please note that this letter may be sent electronically via the 'e-boks' system.

Your first appointment with the midwife is an individual appointment, and it is normally scheduled for week 13-15 of your pregnancy. As far as possible, the same midwife will see you throughout your pregnancy.



Consultations and health checks

The appointments with your GP and midwife comprise consultations centred on your own health and well-being, and health checks. The consultations are based on the wishes and needs of the individual patient - i.e. you - and generally focus on aspects such as:

- Your physical, psychological and social circumstances, including diet, exercise, alcohol, way of life, finances and social network
- Any ailments resulting from your pregnancy
- Your ideas about pregnancy, child-birth, breastfeeding and coping with a newborn baby
- Your plans for the entire process, including expectations for the time immediately following the birth.

The health checks comprise blood pressure measurements, as well as examination of your urine to establish protein and sugar levels, and to check for bacteria. The doctor or midwife will also check how the pregnancy is progressing, how the foetus is growing and how it is positioned in your uterus.



Hospital check-ups on your unborn baby

Early in the pregnancy, all pregnant women are offered examinations designed to establish the condition of the foetus. These comprise:

- A risk assessment, consisting of an ultrasound scan of the foetus - known as a 'nuchal fold scan' - in week 11-13 of pregnancy. The result of this ultrasound scan is combined with a blood sample - a 'double test', as it is known - in week 9-13 of pregnancy. Together, these measures can indicate the risk of the foetus having Downs Syndrome or other chromosome defects.
- An ultrasound scan around week 20 of pregnancy, which is used to check for a variety of deformities.

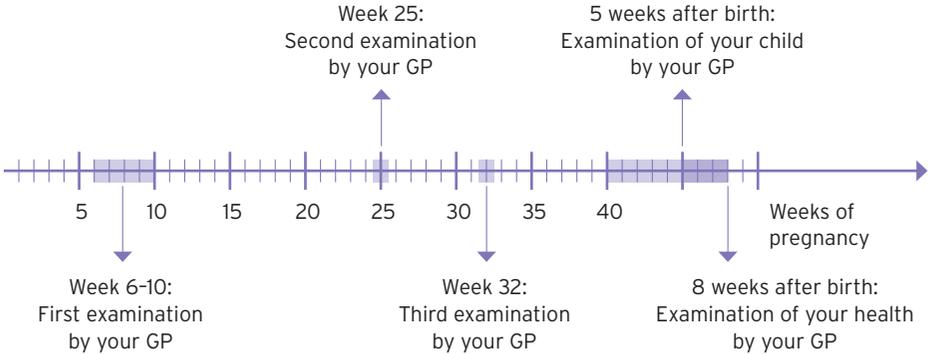
You are free to choose whether or not you want these examinations of your unborn baby, and your GP will inform you of your options in this regard during your first pregnancy examination in week 6-10 of your pregnancy. If you want to find out more about the examinations before making a decision, your GP will give you a referral to the maternity ward.

Other examinations

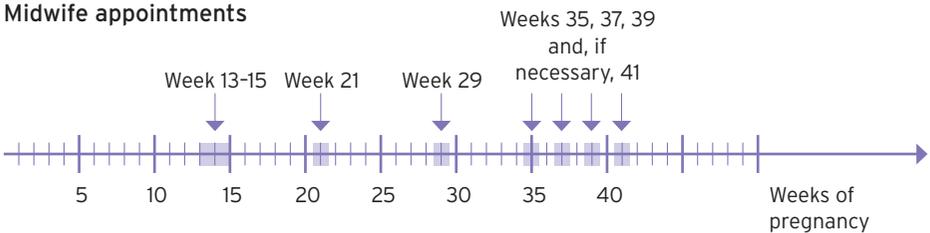
If your GP or midwife considers it necessary during your pregnancy, you may be referred for additional examinations at the hospital - by an OB-GYN, for example.

The graphics below present the programme of examinations offered by the Region of Southern Denmark:

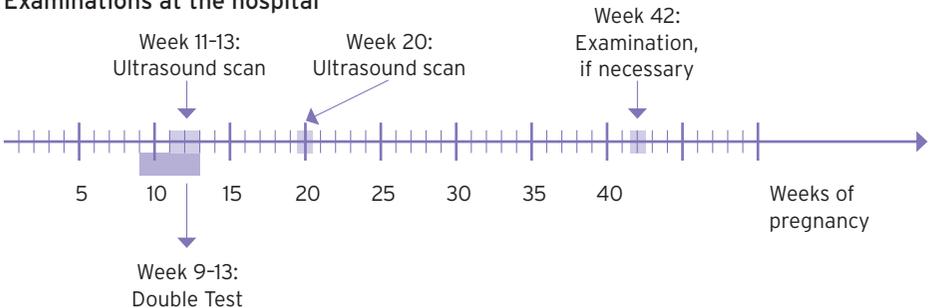
Examinations by your GP



Midwife appointments



Examinations at the hospital



Preparation for childbirth and parenthood

Prenatal support, i.e. preparation for childbirth and parenthood, consists of:

- Group classes: Five sets of two lessons, where you and your partner meet other parents-to-be, giving you the opportunity to build up a network.
- Theme classes for pregnant couples who prefer not to participate in group classes. You and your partner can choose which theme classes to attend.
- Open house events: You and your partner can visit the maternity ward
- Classes for pregnant women with special needs: Young mothers, overweight women, and women expecting multiple babies.

You are free to choose what kind of prenatal support classes you wish to participate in, and you need to take care of all registrations, etc. yourself

You are welcome to sign up for classes before or after your first visit to the midwife.

The classes are free of charge.

Use the table below to determine how and where to contact your local midwife, and how to sign up for prenatal support classes. Visit the websites of the individual maternity wards to find out more about what they offer, including the times and venues for prenatal preparation classes in your local area.

| Maternity wards | Midwife clinics |
|--|---|
| Sygehus Sønderjylland To find out more about pregnancy, childbirth and parenthood, visit: sygehussonderjylland.dk | Sønderborg, Nordborg, Aabenraa, Tønder, Skærbæk and Haderslev |
| Sygehus Lillebælt To find out more about pregnancy, childbirth and parenthood, visit: sygehuslillebaelt.dk | Kolding, Vejle, Fredericia, Give and Brørup. |
| Sydvestjysk Sygehus To find out more about pregnancy, childbirth and parenthood, visit: sydvestjysksygehus.dk | Esbjerg, Brørup, Grindsted, Ølgod, Ribe and Varde. |
| OUH Odense Universitetshospital To find out more about pregnancy, childbirth and parenthood, visit: ouh.dk | Odense, Vollslose, Middelfart, Bogense, Assens and Kerteminde. |
| OUH Svendborg Sygehus To find out more about pregnancy, childbirth and parenthood, visit: ouh.dk | Svendborg, Assens, Fåborg, Nyborg, Nr. Lyndelse, Ringe, Rudkøbing and Ærøskøbing. |



What is the point of prenatal support classes?

Prenatal support classes are a service for you and your partner.

Participating in the classes will help you prepare as well as possible for coping with pregnancy, childbirth and the immediate postnatal period. You will also have the chance to meet other parents-to-be.

The contents of the various classes are built up around main themes centred on:

- Being pregnant
- Becoming parents
- Bonding with your child
- Breastfeeding
- Preparing for labour
- Caring for the newborn child

The classes will provide you with knowledge about pregnancy and the changes that the situation may entail for your relationship. They will also help prepare you for your new role and the physical, psychological and social changes that accompany it.

After taking the classes, you and your partner will know how to tell if labour has started and how it may proceed – both if it progresses normally and if situations arise that require intervention. You will also have some information about how to handle pain, and how your partner can help and support you. In addition, the classes explain what happens during the period of childbirth, both if you have to be admitted into hospital and if you are discharged shortly after the birth.

Finally, the classes will teach you how to handle the initial period at home with a newborn baby. In this context, they focus on how to start breastfeeding properly, the role of the father/partner, reactions from siblings, emotions, getting to know your newborn baby and forging bonds. They also look at how to deal with mood swings, post-natal reactions, your sex life and contraception. Briefly put, the classes are designed to provide you with a solid basis of knowledge about becoming parents.

The birth

During labour, you and your partner will receive support and guidance from the midwife. The midwife will ensure that you have the best possible conditions for a good, safe birth. If necessary, an OB-GYN may also be present, and there may be some medical students in the room as well.

After your baby has been delivered, the midwife will start discussing the postnatal period with you and your partner, and you will then agree on a plan for the immediate future.

In principle, you will be discharged within a day of giving birth, as soon as you are ready to go home.

If you and/or your newborn baby need care or treatment, you will be offered hospitalisation on the postnatal ward.

If you are discharged within 24 hours of the birth

If you have given birth for the first time and/or at home, you will be offered a home visit from a midwife on the day after the birth.

If it is not the first time you have given birth, you will receive a phone call from the maternity ward on the day after the birth to hear how you are coping, and to offer advice and guidance.

The maternity ward will make sure to inform the local authority that you have given birth.

Postnatal clinics

There are postnatal clinics at all maternity wards in the Region of Southern Denmark. You can contact these clinics 24/7 during the first seven days after you have been discharged from hospital.

Postnatal appointment

When you are discharged, you will be given a time for an appointment with the midwife at the postnatal clinic for the second or third day after the birth of your baby. If you are hospitalised after the birth of your baby, you will be given the opportunity to talk to a midwife 2-3 days after the birth.

During the appointment, the midwife will discuss your condition and that of your child, ask how things are going with regard to breastfeeding/your child's nourishment, and follow up on any issues related to the birth. You will also be offered a review of the entire process, with the emphasis on how you and your husband/partner experienced the pregnancy, labour and birth.

The baby

In connection with the appointment on the second or third day, there will be time to perform a blood test and a hearing exam on your baby. You will also receive advice and guidance about breastfeeding and the nourishment and well-being of your baby. If necessary, you may also spend a few hours in the postnatal clinic with your baby. Supplementary visits to the postnatal clinic may be arranged, if required.

Within the first week of being discharged, you can always call the postnatal clinic if you have any questions about:

- Your well-being and that of your baby
- Problems with breastfeeding
- Any other areas of uncertainty

You will find the addresses and phone numbers of the postnatal clinics online at www.regionsyddanmark.dk/gravid.

After the birth

The healthcare assistant

Once your child has been born, the maternity ward will notify the healthcare assistant in your local authority. The health visitor will contact you within a few days of the birth to arrange a home visit 4-5 days after the birth if you were discharged from the hospital within 72 hours. If you and your child were hospitalised for longer, the healthcare assistant will contact you no more than one week after you were discharged.

If necessary, you can contact the healthcare assistant yourself. You will find the relevant address and phone number on the local authority website.

During the first home visit, the healthcare visitor will assess your health and well-

being in relation to breastfeeding and issues such as jaundice and fatigue, and will also check your physical and psychological condition, ask about spotting, etc.

The healthcare assistant will visit you regularly during the first 12 months of your baby's life. If you need extra visits and/or guidance, you can arrange these directly with the healthcare assistant.

The healthcare assistant organises young mothers'/fathers' groups in your area and can provide advice and guidance about initiatives for new mothers/fathers and their children in the local authority.

Moreover, many local authorities set up special groups - to help mothers who suffer from postnatal depression, for example.





AFTER THE BIRTH

The healthcare assistant participates in these arrangements as well.

If necessary, parents-to-be may arrange visits from the healthcare assistant during pregnancy. These visits provide the opportunity to ask questions and talk about the pregnancy and the time immediately after the birth.

GP

When your child is five weeks old, you will need to take him or her to your GP for an examination. You have to book this appointment yourself. The doctor will talk to you about paediatric examinations and vaccinations.

Eight weeks after the birth, you need to book an appointment with your GP for a check-up of your own health.

During the appointment, you can talk about

- How you feel following the birth
- How your family is coping
- Contraception.

Your health check will also include an assessment of your pelvic floor and other examinations, depending on how smooth the labour and birth were, and how you are feeling in general.

You can always contact your GP for a referral for a follow-up postnatal appointment – no matter how much time has passed since the birth.

Leaflets and information from the internet

Here are some links to material we recommend you read in connection with pregnancy, childbirth and maternity.

Information for pregnant women from the Danish Health Authority is published on www.sst.dk

- Recommendations for pregnant women from the Danish Health Authority
- Risk assessment and embryo diagnosis - guidelines for pregnant women
- Child on the way (available as a PDF, and also on sale in book form)
- Healthy habits before, during and after pregnancy
- Alcohol and pregnancy
- Advice about diet and exercise while you are pregnant
- Pregnancy and smoking
- Check the nappy
- SIDS is preventable

Information from the Danish Committee for Health Education is published at www.sundhedsoplysning.dk

- Breastfeeding in brief.

Pregnant



My baby



Information for pregnant women from the Danish Ministry of Environment and Food is published at www.babykemi.dk

- About good chemistry for pregnant and breastfeeding women

Information for pregnant women at www.borger.dk

- To read the information, click 'Family and Children'
- Heel blood test

For information about traffic safety, visit www.sikkertrafik.dk

- Children in cars

To watch the Region of Southern Denmark's short films about starting breastfeeding and looking after your newborn baby, go to www.regionsyddanmark.dk/gravid

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Want to find out more?

Visit www.regionsyddanmark.dk/gravid to find out more about the various services, etc. that the Region of Southern Denmark offers as your pregnancy progresses, during childbirth, and in the period immediately after the birth of your child.