

Antenatal Care: A Comprehensive Guide for Expecting Parents



Highlights

Antenatal care includes regular check-ups with a doctor or midwife throughout pregnancy.

These appointments help ensure the health and well-being of both the parent and the baby.

Routine scans and tests are part of antenatal care.

Informed consent is required for any tests or procedures.

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Antenatal Care

Attending Antenatal Appointments

Discuss physical symptoms related to pregnancy.

Learn about changes happening during each trimester.

Talk about your birth plan and delivery options.

Receive advice on newborn care after birth.

Get support for lifestyle choices, such as: Mental health and emotional well-being. Nutrition and dietary advice. Quitting smoking. Avoiding alcohol consumption. Addressing any personal or family concerns.

Mental health and emotional well-being.

Nutrition and dietary advice.

Quitting smoking.

Avoiding alcohol consumption.

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Healthcare Providers During Antenatal Appointments

If you plan to give birth in a hospital, antenatal care will likely be provided by hospital-based doctors or midwives.

If you choose a birth center, your care will typically be managed by midwives.

If you opt for a home birth, a midwife will usually provide antenatal care at home or in a community healthcare setting.

During Antenatal Appointments

Your overall health and any potential risks.

The stage of your pregnancy.

Any symptoms or concerns you may have.

Ask about the first day of your last period to estimate your due date.

Review your medical history and general health.

Discuss any medications you are taking.

Provide advice on healthy eating and lifestyle changes.
Address any physical symptoms you may be experiencing.
Ask about your home and work environment, including your support system.

Monitoring blood pressure, weight, and urine.
Organizing blood tests and screenings.
Checking for signs of conditions such as anemia or gestational diabetes.
Measuring your abdomen and listening to the baby's heartbeat.

Information about antenatal classes.
Discussions about birth options and preferences.
Guidance on taking your baby home, feeding, and postnatal care.

Antenatal Appointments Schedule

Partner Attendance at Appointments

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Healthcare Providers

Doctors and Midwives: Your primary support during pregnancy, providing guidance, care, and monitoring for both you and your baby. They will also help you navigate various tests, screenings, and health assessments.

Obstetricians: Specialized doctors who focus on the care of pregnant individuals, particularly if there are complications or higher-risk pregnancies.

Sonographers: Technicians who perform ultrasound scans to monitor the health and development of your baby.

Specialists: If any issues or concerns arise, your healthcare provider may refer you to a specialist (such as a genetic counselor or maternal-fetal medicine specialist).

Educational Tools

Antenatal Classes: Classes can provide you with information on childbirth, breastfeeding, newborn care, and postnatal recovery. These are typically offered by hospitals, community centers, or private organizations.

Books and Websites: Reliable pregnancy and parenting books, as well as

educational websites, can offer guidance on what to expect during each stage of your pregnancy. These resources can help you understand common concerns and how to manage them.

Mobile Apps: Pregnancy apps can track your baby's development, your health, and offer reminders for antenatal appointments, tests, and essential milestones throughout your pregnancy.

Tests and Screening Tools

Blood Tests: Routine blood tests check for iron levels, blood type, infections, and conditions like gestational diabetes. These tests help monitor your health and your baby's development.

Ultrasound Scans: Ultrasound is used to monitor the growth and position of the baby, check for any abnormalities, and assess the baby's heartbeat. These scans also help predict the due date and assess the placenta's health.

Urine Tests: Urine tests are conducted during most antenatal visits to screen for conditions like urinary tract infections, protein levels, and gestational diabetes.