

# So you think you might be **pregnant?**



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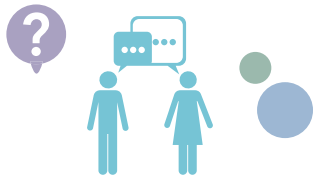
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## About BPAS

British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) is the UK's leading provider of abortion care.

We offer unplanned pregnancy counselling and abortion treatment. We've been treating women with unplanned or unwanted pregnancy for over 40 years. Every year we treat almost 9,500 teenagers.

Nearly all the women we see have their care paid for by the NHS. We also provide contraception, STI testing and vasectomy.



## About this booklet

Thousands of young people find themselves in your situation every year, so we produced this booklet to help you through it.

If you feel like you have no-one to turn to, or don't want to discuss it with someone who knows you, then you can get advice from your local family planning clinic, Brook centre or BPAS (see our Information & Advice page at the back of this booklet).

All of these organisations deal with young people every day, so they understand what you are going through.

# What are the signs of pregnancy?

You can develop signs of pregnancy as soon as 1 week after conception (when a sperm fertilises an egg after sex).

**These can vary, but may include:**

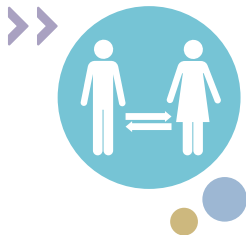
- Your period being late
- A lighter or shorter period than normal
- Swelling or tenderness in the breasts
- Sensitive nipples
- Peeing more than usual
- Feeling sick or being sick
- Tiredness and feeling irritable
- Mood changes
- Appetite changes (going off certain foods or food cravings)
- Stomach cramps, period-like pains or feeling bloated

If you experience any of these signs (and especially if your period is late), you should do a pregnancy test.



## How does pregnancy happen?

Pregnancy occurs when a man and woman have sex without using contraception or they experience contraception failure (for instance a condom splits or a pill is forgotten or taken late). A sperm can then fertilise an egg by joining with it.



## Not sure if you are pregnant?

Most pharmacies and major supermarkets sell **home pregnancy tests**, costing less than £5. These are reliable as long as you follow the instructions carefully.

Most pregnancy tests work as soon as your period is 1 day late. If your periods are not regular, take the test 3 weeks after unprotected sex.

If you've had sex in the last 5 days you may be able to use an emergency contraception method. See pages 22-25 for more information.

## Where can I get a pregnancy test?

You can have a test for **FREE** at:

- Brook Centres (if you are under 25)
- Some GPs
- Many family planning clinics
- Sexual health or genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics

You can also get a free pregnancy test at BPAS.  
See [www.bpas.org](http://www.bpas.org) for BPAS locations.



## Testing at a clinic?

If you've got an appointment for a test at a clinic, don't forget to take:

- Details of the date of the first day of your last period
- Money to pay - check with the clinic before you go

If you have a friend or relative you can trust, then take them along too.

# Test results


When you get your result you will know whether you are pregnant (**POSITIVE**) or not pregnant (**NEGATIVE**).

If the test result is **NEGATIVE** and you don't want to get pregnant in the future, you need to think about the suitability of your contraception. Our guide 'So you want to know about contraception?' gives information on all contraceptive methods. You can see this at [www.bpas.org](http://www.bpas.org)

If your result is **POSITIVE** then you have 3 choices and **YOU** need to decide what to do. There are many people you can talk to who will be able to help you to make this decision.

## You could:

- Continue the pregnancy and become a parent
- Continue the pregnancy and choose adoption or fostering
- End the pregnancy with abortion



You might feel like you want to ignore the pregnancy and hope it'll go away...  
**...but it won't.**

## Who can I talk to?

Once your pregnancy is confirmed, it is important to make plans for the next step as soon as you can.

It is normal to have mixed feelings about being pregnant when you didn't plan to be. It can really help to talk about your options with someone you can trust. If the father of the child, or your parents are not the ones to turn to, you could try another member of your family, such as an older sister or brother, an aunt, cousin or grandparent. A friend, school counsellor, school nurse or doctor might be another option.

You might feel that you want someone to tell you what to do as this can seem easier than making your own mind up. The final decision **must be your own**.



An unplanned pregnancy can make you feel: confused, frightened, shocked and lonely.



## Seeking help

Some organisations offering free pregnancy testing and counselling are strongly opposed to abortion and will not discuss all the options available to you in a balanced way.

If they talk about abortion it will be in a negative way and they may not provide you with any information on how to get abortion treatment. Before you make an appointment it would be a good idea to ask the organisation whether they are able to arrange an appointment for abortion treatment if you decide on that option.



## Your options

It might help to think about how other women felt about becoming a parent, adoption, fostering or abortion. Here are some of the things they say; have a look at them and perhaps write down any other thoughts you have.

We can arrange for a pregnancy test, offer counselling regarding your options and provide an abortion should you decide that is what you want to do.

Whatever decision you make, it's important to take action as early as possible. Arrange maternity care promptly if you decide to continue the pregnancy, or arrange an abortion as soon as you can.

### FACT

Having an abortion will not affect your chances of having a child in the future.



## Keep the child



I don't have enough money to bring up a child properly 

“My boyfriend and I both want a child”

“I think I am too young to have a child”

## Adoption or fostering


“I like the idea of giving someone else the child they can't create themselves”

“I don't think I could give up the child after 9 months of pregnancy and giving birth”

## Abortion

“My religious beliefs are against abortion”



I could postpone being a parent until later in life when I feel ready 

## What is abortion?

An abortion is when the pregnancy is ended so that it does not result in the birth of a child. Sometimes this is called 'termination of pregnancy'.

The pregnancy is ended, either by taking pills (medical abortion) or by surgery (surgical abortion).



## Is abortion legal?

Yes, abortion is legal. In non NHS clinics it is possible up to 24 weeks of pregnancy.

After 24 weeks of pregnancy, abortion can only be carried out in an NHS hospital in very exceptional circumstances.

### FACT

Every year nearly 9,500 teenagers have abortions at BPAS.

## Is abortion safe?

Yes - early abortions are the simplest and safest. Complications are rare, but all procedures do have some risks.

### FACT

About 91% of abortions take place in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy - which is within 8 weeks of missing a period.

## What happens if I choose abortion?

Make arrangements as soon as you can to see your GP, talk to Brook or arrange a consultation with BPAS to discuss the treatment options available to you.

Call **03457 30 40 30** to book a consultation with BPAS.

### FACT

Almost 2 out of every 3 pregnancies in under 16s end in abortion.

## Do my parents have to know?



Not if you do not want them to. Although we will not talk to your parents against your wishes, we do encourage you to tell a parent or another adult who you trust, so that they can support you through this time.

Our staff will make sure you are fully aware of what's involved with an abortion. If you are sure it's what you want to do and you understand the procedure and everything that may happen, you can agree to the abortion yourself even if you are aged under 16.

### FACT

Even if you are under 16, doctors have to keep anything you tell them completely private.



## Will anyone be told about the abortion?

No. We will not tell anyone about your treatment without your permission.

Doctors, nurses and other health workers are not allowed to give out information about you without your consent unless they think that you or another person is in serious danger. In these exceptional cases they would try to discuss it with you first.

Our staff will ask you whether they can inform your GP as it is always best for them to know your full medical details.

If you choose to have an abortion, you do not need to get the agreement of the father. However, some men will want to share in the decision and can be very supportive.


It is up to you whether you tell the father or involve him in your choice. He has no legal right to be informed of your decision. More information for the father is available in the men's section of the BPAS website [www.bpas.org](http://www.bpas.org)



## Do I have to pay?

In most areas of the country abortions are paid for by the NHS, and are carried out at an NHS hospital or BPAS Clinic. Your family planning service or GP can advise you of the services available to you.

Call BPAS on **03457 30 40 30**, and ask if we can treat you on behalf of the NHS (at no charge to you). If you cannot get an NHS funded abortion at BPAS, we can treat you but there will be a charge.



Call BPAS on **03457 30 40 30**  
and we will help you.



## What happens next?

You will attend a consultation appointment when you will have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. A doctor or nurse will carry out a scan to confirm how long you have been pregnant and discuss the various types of abortion available to you. An appointment at a clinic will then be made and the abortion will be carried out at this second appointment.

Different methods of abortion are available, depending on your medical history and how long you have been pregnant. You will be given more information about the method of treatment you choose and how to prepare for your treatment.

## Can I bring someone with me?

You will find it really helpful to bring a family member, friend or boyfriend to support you at the treatment clinic. If you are under 16, a female adult can stay with you during most of the treatment.

Otherwise your friend or relative may stay with you until you go for treatment, and you can rejoin them in the waiting room afterwards.

If you choose treatment under general anaesthetic you will need an adult to accompany you home when you are discharged from the clinic.

# What kinds of abortion are available?



## Medical abortion

### Abortion pill up to 9 weeks

- Up to 9 weeks of pregnancy
- Involves taking medicine to cause an early miscarriage (it can feel like having a heavy and more painful period)
- At least 2 visits to the clinic are required  
No surgery or anaesthetic is involved

### Abortion pill after 9 weeks

- 9 to 24 weeks of pregnancy
- Involves taking medicine to cause the womb to contract and push out the pregnancy
- From 22 weeks an injection to the womb is also required
- 2 visits to the clinic are required
- In some cases an overnight stay may be required at the second visit

More details and videos about “What to expect on the day” can be viewed at [www.bpas.org](http://www.bpas.org)

## Surgical abortion

### Vacuum aspiration

- Up to 15 weeks
- Involves removing the pregnancy by gentle suction
- 1 visit to the clinic, going home the same day
- Can be done awake or asleep (under local or general anaesthetic)



### FACT

You can use the BPAS pregnancy calculator to find out how many weeks pregnant you are and what your treatment options are.  
Visit [www.bpas.org](http://www.bpas.org)

### Dilatation & Evacuation

- Between 15 to 24 weeks of pregnancy
- A doctor will remove the pregnancy using narrow forceps passed through the neck of the womb
- Carried out under a general anaesthetic (asleep)
- 1 visit to the clinic, usually returning home the same day for abortions up to 20 weeks
- Treatments over 20 weeks may require more than 1 visit or a local overnight stay

If you require more information about the different methods of abortion available to you BPAS staff can discuss this with you.



## Will I feel anything?

**General anaesthetic** - you are asleep during the treatment and will not feel any pain. Afterwards you may get period-like cramps.

**Local anaesthetic** - this involves an injection into the neck of the womb and you stay awake during the procedure. The procedure can be uncomfortable but a nurse will be with you and can give you painkillers.

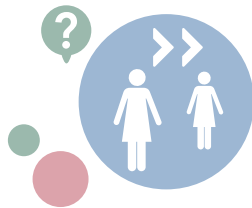
**Early medical abortion** (abortion pill up to 9 weeks) - this involves passing the pregnancy at home. You are likely to experience some pain, but the clinic staff will advise you on pain relief and other possible side effects.

**Later medical abortion** (abortion pill after 9 weeks) - this involves passing the pregnancy while you are awake and you are likely to experience some pain when the womb pushes out the pregnancy. The staff at the unit will give you painkillers.

## What happens afterwards?

You may experience some bleeding after the abortion and some pain similar to period pains. The nurses at the clinic will give you plenty of information on how to look after yourself at home. With some of the treatments you will be well enough to return to school, college or work the next day. With others you may need to rest for longer.

## How will I feel after the abortion?



Everyone is different. It often helps if you have been able to involve a friend or relative, as you can talk to them about your feelings.

You won't forget that you've had an abortion, but most women who choose an abortion don't regret it - especially when you have thought carefully about all of your reasons first.

**It is normal to feel a range of different emotions, often all at once:**

- Relief
- Anger
- Optimism
- Regret
- Freedom
- Guilt

These feelings do not usually last for long, and may come and go.

BPAS offers post-abortion counselling, if you feel that you would like to talk about your feelings.

## Emergency contraception

Emergency contraception can be used to help prevent an unwanted pregnancy up to 5 days after sex.

If your contraception fails (you forget to take your pill or the condom splits) or you didn't use contraception at all, you can use emergency contraception, but you need to act fast.

There are 2 kinds of emergency contraception; the emergency contraceptive pill (morning after pill) and the copper intra uterine device (IUD or coil).

Make sure you get advice on emergency contraception as soon as possible after having unprotected sex.



## Emergency contraceptive pill (morning after pill)

There are two different kinds of emergency contraception pill (morning after pill); Levonelle® and ellaOne®.

The pills work by preventing or delaying the release of an egg from the ovary (ovulation,) and may also affect the lining of the womb so a fertilised egg cannot settle there.

Levonelle® can be taken up to 72 hours (3 days) after unprotected sex.

ellaOne® can be used up to 120 hours (5 days) after unprotected sex.



## The emergency intrauterine device (IUD)



An IUD, which is sometimes called the 'coil' is the most effective method of emergency contraception. It can be fitted up to 5 days after unprotected sex, or up to 5 days after the date of expected ovulation (release of egg from the ovary).

### FACT

An egg lives for just a day after ovulation but sperm can live inside a woman's body for around 6 days.



# About emergency contraception



## FACT

The emergency contraceptive pill or the IUD will not prevent sexually transmitted infections. If you've had unprotected sex, you should think about having an STI test.

Emergency contraception is available from places like these:

- GPs
- Brook centres (for under 25s)
- Pharmacies
- Family planning centres

Either contact these organisations direct or your GP or local family planning service will be able to tell you where you can access emergency contraception in your area.

Emergency contraception does not protect you against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) like Chlamydia, which can lead to fertility problems.

You can attend a genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic for free and confidential advice about STIs. Ring the National Sexual Health helpline on **0300 123 7123** or see **[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)** to locate your nearest GUM.

## Information and advice

### **BPAS**

BPAS provides pregnancy testing, emergency contraception, counselling for unplanned pregnancy and abortion treatment. Most of the women we see have their treatment paid for by the NHS. Call **03457 30 40 30**. Open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. [www.bpas.org](http://www.bpas.org)

### **fpa (Family Planning Association)**

fpa works to improve sexual health awareness across the UK. For advice on contraception, pregnancy choices, abortion and STIs visit [www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)

### **Brook**

Provides free and confidential sexual health advice and contraception for under 25s. The website has tons of useful information [www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)

### **Rape Crisis**

Rape Crisis centres provide a range of specialist services for women and girls who have been raped or experienced another form of sexual violence, whether as adults or children. Visit [www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk) to find your nearest centre.

### **NHS national sexual health helpline**

NHS Providing information and advice on contraception, sexual health and local services. Call **0300 123 7123** or see [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## Information and advice (if you continue your pregnancy)



### **Department for Work and Pensions**

For information regarding maternity allowance, child benefits, child tax credit and support visit [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

### **National Childbirth Trust**

The NCT is a charity for parents. They provide information and support to parents through pregnancy, birth and early days of parenthood. For information and advice on pregnancy and birth Visit [www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk)

### **British Association for Adoption & Fostering**

BAAF works with everyone involved with adoption and fostering across the UK. Telephone: 020 7421 2600 or visit [www.baaf.org.uk/info/pregnant](http://www.baaf.org.uk/info/pregnant)

### **Social Services**

Google social services in your area for contact information.

BPAS - here if you need us.

03457 30 40 30

[www.bpas.org](http://www.bpas.org)



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