

Binscombe Medical Centre

Advice in Early Pregnancy

Congratulations on your pregnancy! This leaflet is designed to help you know what to do next, and what to look out for.

What do I need to do next?

All you need to do at this stage is to make a booking appointment with the midwife at the surgery, for when you are around 10 weeks' pregnant. Please book this appointment as soon as possible as they do get booked up.

What will the midwife do?

She will take your details, send routine blood tests and arrange the 12 week scan.

What is the 12 week scan for?

It serves 3 purposes:

- To confirm your dates (and the number of babies!!)
- To confirm that all is well and you have not had a miscarriage
- It is a screening test for Down's syndrome. Combined with a blood test this will give you a risk for Down's. It does not prove whether or not your baby has Down's but will tell you how likely it is. If the risk is felt to be high, you may wish to consider a test called an amniocentesis, which can prove whether or not your baby has Down's. Screening for Down's is not compulsory but most couples find it useful.

SOME DO'S AND DON'TS	
DO	DON'T
Take folic acid 400mcg daily until you are 12 weeks' pregnant	Smoke cigarettes (please ask if you would like advice on how to quit)
Continue normal physical activities such as exercise, work, and sexual intercourse. These will not cause a miscarriage.	Drink alcohol for the first 3 months. Thereafter a glass or two here and there is probably harmless but don't get drunk.
Expect to be more tired than usual in the first 3 months, this is normal and due to the hormonal changes taking place.	Eat foods that might put you at risk of listeria or salmonella – these include soft cheeses, pâté, and raw eggs
Enjoy being pregnant!	Handle cat litter or pregnant farm animals

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How would I know if anything is going wrong in the first 3 months?

There are two things to be aware of that can go wrong in the first 3 months – miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy that has implanted in the fallopian tube).

Miscarriage

This is common, affecting about 1 in 6 of all pregnancies. It will usually manifest as bleeding, or become apparent at the 12 week scan. If you have any bleeding you do not need to panic, but should call the surgery, or make an appointment on the next working day to speak to a doctor, as you may require an early scan to see what is happening.

A miscarriage can be a very sad thing to happen, but is unlikely to make you very unwell unless you are bleeding very heavily, and there is no treatment that can affect whether or not you will miscarry. For these reasons there is no need to go to A&E at a weekend or at night unless you are bleeding very heavily (more than a period), as they will simply ask you to contact us the next day to arrange a scan.

Ectopic pregnancy

While much rarer than miscarriage, this is very different as it can make you very unwell indeed, and even be life-threatening. **If you suspect you have an ectopic pregnancy you should seek advice from a doctor without delay**, even if it is at a weekend or overnight.

The main symptom of an ectopic pregnancy is pain. It is usual to have minor twinges across the lower abdomen that come and go in early pregnancy. A more persistent pain, usually on one side near an ovary can be a sign of an ectopic pregnancy. This may be accompanied by bleeding but sometimes there is no bleeding at all.