

PREGNANCY

OPTIONS

FACT SHEET

Unplanned pregnancy

The thought that you may be pregnant can be overwhelming for anyone, whether the pregnancy is planned or not. It is only you who will know whether you are ready to have a child.

This Fact Sheet is designed to assist in the process of making a decision regarding an unplanned pregnancy. It is not meant to encourage you to make any particular decision, but may be used as a guide to look at your options.

Unplanned pregnancies do happen and everyone has the right to make their own decision.

How to tell if you are pregnant

The first step is to find out whether you are pregnant for sure. Some of the first signs of pregnancy are:

- a missed period, or your period may be shorter or lighter than usual
- tiredness and loss of energy
- tenderness or swelling in your breasts
- urinating more than usual
- nausea or vomiting
- food cravings

Having one or more of these signs does not necessarily mean that you are pregnant. It is also possible to be pregnant yet not experience any of the above.

To confirm you are pregnant you will need to have a pregnancy test. You can do a urine test yourself by buying one from a pharmacy or supermarket, or see your doctor, SHINE SA or the Pregnancy Advisory Centre.

Testing your urine first thing in the morning gives most accurate results, and it is important to follow instructions carefully. If either a blood or urine test is done before you have missed a period, it may not be accurate. If you have a negative pregnancy test before your period is more than a week late, it is a good idea to repeat the test.

Getting support

You may feel that talking about the pregnancy is not going to help, but people often find it does help them to consider their choices and decide what to do. You don't have to make the decision alone. It is important to get support as early as possible.

Think about who you will tell. It might be helpful to talk it over with someone you trust, who won't tell you what to do. Think about who might be there for you, to listen to you and provide support so you can make the right decision for you. This may be a friend, partner or family member, or it may be useful to speak to someone from a health service.

Be aware that some organisations which advertise help for pregnancy support can be biased, either by not providing you with all your options or actively discouraging consideration of abortion. If you're not getting the advice and support you want, you can go elsewhere for help. To find out about an organisation before you approach them you can call:

SHINE SA Sexual Healthline: 1300 883 793
Toll free (country callers): 1800 188 171

Pregnancy Advisory Centre: 8243 3999
Toll free (country callers): 1800 672 966

Options

If you have confirmed you are pregnant, you have three options:

- continue the pregnancy and become a parent
- have an abortion to end the pregnancy
- continue the pregnancy and consider adoption or alternative care

Whatever you decide, the choice is yours. Some of the things you may want to consider in making the decision are:

• **Firstly, would you 'rule out' any of these choices?**

• **How do you feel about being pregnant?**

It may help to write things down, such as feelings, fears, hopes and worries. Include how you feel about each of the options you are considering.

- **What may be the effects for you, both positive and negative, of taking up each option?** Listing these can be useful to look over and compare.
- **How would other people who are important to you react?** Can you discuss this with them? Would it affect your decision?
- **What do you think needs to be in place before you become a parent?** For example, some people say it is very important to have a secure place to call home, to finish school, to have a supportive partner or pay off some debt before having a child. Everyone is different. What steps could you take to put any of these into place? How do you feel about taking these steps?

It is normal to feel confused or even unsure about one particular choice you may be 'leaning towards'. Even if you are feeling certain about your decision, you might still want to make an appointment with a doctor or sexual health service to discuss your options. It might be helpful to have an idea of how many weeks pregnant you are as this can give a timeframe for making a decision.

The right decision for you may not, in the end, feel 100% 'right', but the bottom line is: **your emotional and mental health and wellbeing is most important.**

Continuing with a pregnancy

Contact your GP, SHINE SA or major hospital to discuss your options regarding antenatal care. To book into a public hospital for antenatal care call the Pregnancy SA Referral Line on 1300 368 820.

The Women's and Children's Health Network is an important resource for you in pregnancy and parenting. Call their Parent Helpline on 1300 364 100.

The Pregnancy Advisory Centre has useful information on continuing with a pregnancy available on their website, and can assist with referral to appropriate support services.

Abortion

You can contact the Pregnancy Advisory Centre for information and self-referral (see below). A range of useful information on abortion is available on their website.

SHINE SA also has a Fact Sheet, *Information on abortion in South Australia*, which can be accessed from the website (www.shinesa.org.au).

If you need help in making a decision, urgent counselling is available at SHINE SA or the Pregnancy Advisory Centre.

People who feel they are making their own decision about their pregnancy are more likely to feel positive about the outcome.

Adoption

The decision to place a child for adoption is difficult and might be made for many reasons. The Department for Child Protection can provide advice as you work through your options.

Parents whose children are adopted permanently give up all their parental rights to and responsibilities for their child. The child is permanently placed with an adoptive family and the child's birth family has no claim on the child.

Alternatives to adoption, such as fostering, may also be possible and these can be discussed.

Department for Child Protection

Website: www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/adoption

Pregnancy Advisory Centre

Tel: 8243 3999

Toll free (country callers): 1800 672 966

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/AbortionSupportServices

CONTACT
SHINE SA

SHINESA

© SHINE SA. Last updated May 2018

SHINE SA fact sheets are regularly reviewed and updated. To download the most recent version visit www.shinesa.org.au

Clinic & Counselling Appointments and General Enquiries

Tel 1300 794 584

Clinic locations and times are available at www.shinesa.org.au

Sexual Healthline

Tel 1300 883 793 Country callers (toll free) 1800 188 171

Talk to a sexual health nurse about any sexual health issue.

Available 9am – 12.30pm, Monday – Friday

National Relay Service

www.relayservice.gov.au

133 677 (TTY/Voice) 1300 555 727 (Speak & Listen) 0423 677 767 (SMS Relay)