

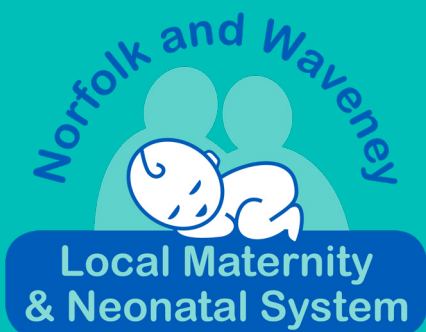
A close-up photograph of a newborn baby's feet, held gently in the palms of two hands. The feet are pink and wrinkled, and the hands are a warm, brownish tone. The background is a soft, light blue fabric.

# Your Choices

before, during and after pregnancy

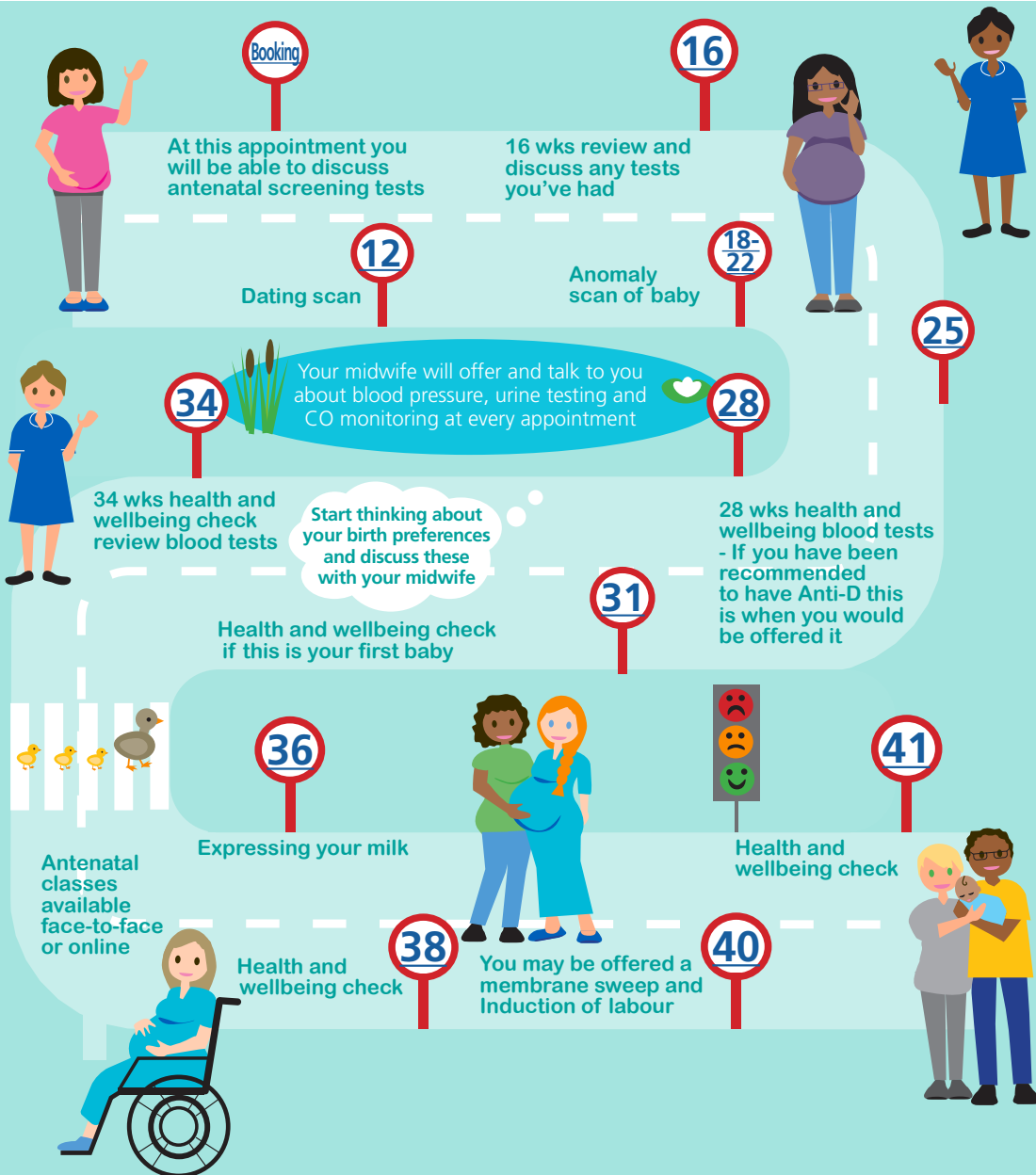
## A Guide to your Maternity Choices

Norfolk & Waveney Local Maternity & Neonatal System is committed to ensuring you have access to high quality maternity care, wherever you choose to have your baby



# Your Pregnancy Journey

The picture below shows the points in your pregnancy journey when you will usually see your midwife or health visitor. You may have more appointments according to your health needs. Click on the links to read more.



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# Your Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS) will support you and your choices about pregnancy care and your baby's birth wherever safe and possible



**This booklet summarises your options and will help you to choose what is right for you and your family**

The information in this booklet will help you to talk to your midwife or doctor about the decisions and choices you can make during your pregnancy and birth.

Your health and wellbeing and any previous pregnancies may affect your choices. Your midwife or doctor will talk to you about this at your antenatal (pregnancy) appointments.

## When you find out you are pregnant:

It's important to see your midwife as early as possible to get the antenatal care and information you need to have a healthy pregnancy.

You can contact your GP surgery or local midwife service as soon as you find out you're pregnant.

At your first (booking) appointment, your midwife will talk to you about your antenatal screening tests. You can find more information about screening on the [NHS website](#).

## Keep yourself and your baby as healthy as possible in pregnancy:

- It's advised not to smoke or drink alcohol, as both can cause serious and long-term problems for you and your baby. Your midwife will advise you on the support available.
- Try to take some regular gentle exercise.
- Aim to eat a healthy diet and find out which foods to avoid during pregnancy.
- Talk to someone about your feelings and any worries during pregnancy.



- Meet up with other expectant parents – you can ask your midwife about local groups.
- Take 400mcg of folic acid every day. Folic acid can help prevent birth defects of your baby's brain and spinal cord. If you have diabetes, epilepsy or a raised body mass index (BMI) you will need a prescription for a higher dose per day.
- Take 10mcg of vitamin D every day. Vitamin D helps support your baby's bone and muscle development. You may be able to get free vitamins if you qualify for the [Healthy Start scheme](#).
- For more healthy living and pregnancy advice visit [Just One Norfolk](#). Or [Suffolk County Council Children's health](#) and children's centre services (SC).

**Contact your midwife or maternity services without delay if you are worried about yourself, or your baby's health.**

**If you have any concerns, please contact your maternity services but information around fetal movement can be found on the [Just One Norfolk Website](#). Follow this [link](#).**

**Some reasons you should get in touch with your midwife or maternity services include:**

- Your baby's movements have slowed down or changed. You can find more information on the [Just One Norfolk](#) website.
- You are bleeding from your vagina.
- You have watery, clear or coloured discharge from your vagina which isn't normal for you.
- You have any of the following symptoms which could be signs of pre-eclampsia which is a serious condition affecting you and your baby: swelling in your hands, face or body, a severe headache that won't go away, which can make you sick, blurred vision, flashing lights or spots or difficulty focusing, severe pain just below your ribs in the middle of your stomach.

If you are unsure always ask your midwife or doctor.

# Shared decisions about your pregnancy care

**You have the right to be involved in choices about your pregnancy care. The following information tells you about your options and how they might affect your pregnancy and your health and wellbeing**

- During your pregnancy you will usually see a small number of healthcare professionals led by your midwife or doctor.
- Your first appointment, known as your booking appointment, is a longer appointment (around 60-90 minutes) that usually takes place before you are 10 weeks pregnant.
- You will be offered regular pregnancy [\(antenatal\) appointments](#) with your midwife or obstetrician (a doctor who specialises in pregnancy care) to check the health and development of you and your baby. These appointments are shorter, usually taking 15-30 minutes.
- You will be offered [antenatal \(pregnancy\) screening](#) and blood tests to find out the chance of your baby having certain conditions or inherited disorders.
- You can take [Pathway to parenting \(P2P\) classes](#) online or in person in some areas to learn about giving birth, feeding and looking after your baby. You can find out more about P2P classes on Just One Norfolk.
- [Consent to treatment](#) means you need to give your permission before you have any medical care, tests or examinations.

**You can find lots of useful pregnancy advice on the following websites:**

[NHS pregnancy and baby](#)

[Just One Norfolk](#)

[Suffolk County Council Children's health and children's centre services \(SC\)](#)



Shared decision making is when health professionals and families work together to make informed choices. It puts you at the centre of decisions about your own treatment and care. To help you with this, the Personalised Care & Support Plan provides you with all the information you need to make an informed decision. Please follow this [link](#) to find out more.

### This means that:

- Your midwife or doctor will talk to you about your pregnancy and birth choices.
- You will explore your care or treatment options, along with information about benefits or risks.
- You can make informed decisions with the help of your midwife or doctor.

## BRAIN can help you ask questions

### **B** Benefits

What are the benefits? For me? For my baby? Are there any benefits of not doing this?

### **R** Risks

What are the risks this is trying to prevent? What are the risks of doing this? What is the evidence for the risk and what is the chance it could happen to you?

### **A** Alternatives

Is there anything else we could try instead?

### **I** Intuition

How do I feel about this?

### **N** Nothing

Do I have to decide now?  
Can this wait?

What happens if I choose to do nothing?



## Decision Making Checklist

- ✓ Accurate and up to date information
- ✓ Easy to understand information
- ✓ Ask for more information if needed
- ✓ Ask for more time if needed
- ✓ Feel free to discuss with your support network before making a decision

You can change your mind at any point and make a different choice.

Maternity staff should respect your decision.

Whatever you decide, the doctors and midwives will support and care for you.

## **There are Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnerships (MNVPs) across England**

MNVPs are teams of parents, their families, health professionals, commissioners and support organisations working together to review and contribute to the development of local maternity and neonatal care.

The James Paget, Queen Elizabeth and Norfolk and Norwich Hospitals each have their own MNVPs to represent the families in their communities.

They run surveys, hold feedback events, listen to your experiences and share your feedback with the wider service to help improve your local maternity and neonatal care.

### **You can get involved with your local MNVP:**

- Email them with any specific feedback about your experience of maternity care.
- Look out for focus groups where you can chat about the care you've received.
- Follow their social media and share your thoughts on specific topics that they post about.
- Volunteer with MNVPs - help them reach out to people who have used the maternity and neonatal services.

The workforce and members of National Maternity Voices are acting in a public service capacity and are expected to adhere to the Nolan Principles for conduct in public life.

The Norfolk & Waveney Local Maternity and Neonatal System is committed to considering the values and opinions of our MNVPs and service users.



The Norfolk & Waveney LMNS has three areas of representation in Norwich, East Norfolk and West Norfolk. To find out more information, please contact your local representative:

### **Norfolk & Norwich Maternity & Neonatal Voices Partnership**

email: [norfolknorwichmnvp@gmail.com](mailto:norfolknorwichmnvp@gmail.com) are aligned to the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital. Follow them on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

### **Birth Voices East Maternity & Neonatal Voices Partnership**

email: [birthvoiceseast@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:birthvoiceseast@yahoo.co.uk) are aligned to the James Paget Hospital. Follow them on [Facebook](#)

### **QEH (King's Lynn) Maternity & Neonatal Voices Partnership**

email: [MNVP.team@qehkl.nhs.uk](mailto:MNVP.team@qehkl.nhs.uk) or go to their [website](#), are aligned to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn. Follow them on [Facebook](#)

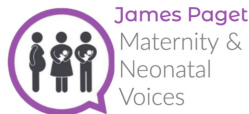


Norfolk & Norwich



Maternity & Neonatal  
Voices Partnership

Working in partnership to improve maternity & neonatal services.



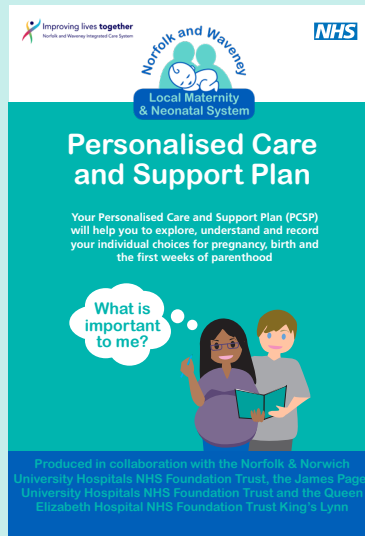
Working in partnership to improve maternity & neonatal services



## Personalised Care & Support Plan (PCSP):

Your Personalised Care and Support Plan (PCSP) will help you to explore, understand and record your individual choices for your pregnancy, birth and the first weeks of parenthood.

- Everyone is different and your care and choices will depend on your individual needs.
- Your midwife will talk to you about your PCSP at your first antenatal appointment when you plan your pregnancy journey.
- Your PCSP gives you the opportunity to record what is important to you and your family.
- You can also use your PCSP to plan the things that are important to you after you've had your baby.
- You can update your PCSP after each antenatal appointment during your pregnancy.
- You can talk to your midwife about your choices to make sure your care is personal to you.
- If you do not receive a PCSP at your first antenatal appointment please call your midwife to request your copy.



# Improving your choices

The LMNS in Norfolk & Waveney is looking at ways to improve your choices and aims to:

- Help you plan your own, personal, pregnancy journey
- Give you information on your care and treatment options and help you to make the choices that are right for you.

All of the local maternity units in Norfolk and Waveney offer midwife, consultant and specialist care, depending on the level of support you need.

## **Pregnancy care before (antenatal) and after birth (postnatal)**

is available in hospital maternity units, community midwifery hubs and sometimes at home. Some or all of these choices are available depending on where you choose to have your baby. If you find any locations difficult to get to due to your individual needs, please talk to your midwife about possible alternatives. Information on each maternity unit is available on page 16.

We work closely with the Healthy Child Programme to help you have a seamless journey from pregnancy to parenthood. Please visit the Just One Norfolk [website](#) to see what services are on offer to you and your baby.

**You can have your baby at home** or at hospital in a midwife-led birthing unit or in a birthing room within a consultant-led birthing unit (also known as a delivery suite).

More information about where you can have your baby is available on page 11.

Your midwife or doctor will talk to you about this in more detail.

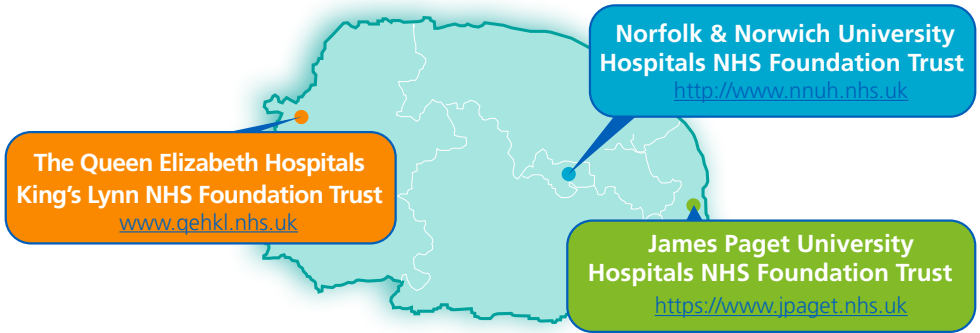
**Your care after your baby is born and you are discharged from hospital will be provided at a local postnatal clinic or at home.**



# Places to give birth

There are three hospitals in the Norfolk & Waveney Local Maternity & Neonatal System:

- ▶ **Norfolk & Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**  
<http://www.nnuh.nhs.uk/>
- ▶ **The Queen Elizabeth Hospitals King's Lynn NHS Foundation Trust**  
[www.gehkl.nhs.uk](http://www.gehkl.nhs.uk)
- ▶ **James Paget University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**  
<https://www.jpaget.nhs.uk/>



If you live in Norfolk and Waveney, you can choose to have your baby at any of these three hospitals or you can choose to have your baby at home.

If you have certain health conditions or your unborn baby has certain health concerns, you may be advised to have your baby in a consultant-led birthing unit or delivery suite. Your midwife or doctor can talk to you about this.

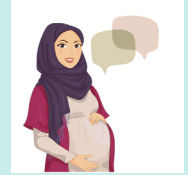
## Translation and interpretation services

Each of our hospitals offers translation and interpretation services. The Queen Elizabeth King's Lynn and James Paget Hospitals offers Language Line and the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital offers Intran. All information on [Just One Norfolk](#) – including this booklet – can be translated into many different languages. There is also a read aloud option.



# Home Birth

Home births can be a choice for some expectant parents who want to have their baby in familiar surroundings with support from midwives and family members.



## Some advantages of giving birth at home include:

- You will be in familiar surroundings, where you may feel more relaxed and better able to cope
- You will have the option for your other children (if you have any) to be involved
- Your partner can stay with you
- You will have a midwife with you at home throughout your labour.

[The 2011 Birth Place in England](#) study focused on birth outcomes in healthy women with a low risk of complications in pregnancy. Research showed that:

For second and subsequent babies, home births are just as safe as hospital births and safer than hospital births for mothers and birthing people.

For first-time parents giving birth at home there is a slightly increased risk to baby's health, but this is still very low.

## Possible Transfer to Hospital:

- The midwife caring for you will monitor you and your baby closely. You may need to transfer to hospital if you need further pain relief, medical assistance or your labour is not progressing as well as expected.
- If you are thinking about having a home birth, your midwife will talk to you about the benefits and risks and what would happen if you had to transfer to hospital during labour.

## Support in Labour:

If you choose a home birth you can opt for the following support:

- Birth pool (private hire)
- Gas and air (also called Entonox)
- TENS machine (pain relief involving mild electrical current)
- Relaxation techniques you may have learnt

You can find out more about pain relief in labour on the [NHS website](#).



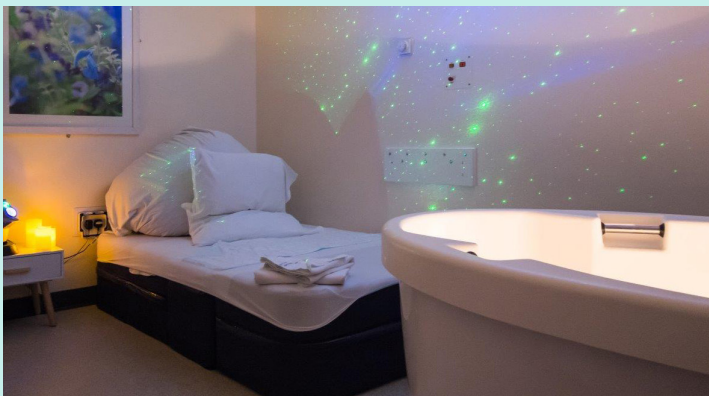
# Midwife Led Birthing Units (MLBU)

Midwife-led birthing units (MLBUs) are staffed by midwives and midwife support workers who aim to create a calm 'home-from-home' environment to help you feel more comfortable in your surroundings during labour. Birth pools are available and encouraged as well as mobilisation and natural relaxation techniques. Epidurals are not available on MLBUs, however, all of the MLBU's are situated close to the consultant led units therefore if you change your mind and would prefer to have an epidural this can be supported.

## Midwife-led birthing units are available at:

- ▶ [Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital](#)
- ▶ [Queen Elizabeth King's Lynn University Hospital](#)
- ▶ [James Paget University Hospital](#)

If there are no concerns with your pregnancy, MLBUs are just as safe as hospital delivery suites for babies and safe for you. This is because the odds of needing any additional medical interventions are much lower. Women and birthing people who start labour in an MLBU are less likely to need a caesarean birth, even if they transfer from the MLBU to a delivery suite during labour.



# Delivery Suites

**A hospital delivery suite can also be known as an obstetric unit or consultant-led unit. If you have additional health needs or risk (complicating) factors you may be advised to have your baby in a delivery suite where you can access further support and care with labour and birth.**

Your midwife or doctor will talk to you about the safest place to give birth so that you can make decisions about your care with the support of the consultant-led team.

In a hospital delivery suite you will have one-to-one care from a midwife (as you would in a midwife-led birthing unit or at home) but you will also have an obstetric team of doctors to oversee your care.

## You might choose to give birth in a delivery suite if:

- You have additional health or pregnancy needs which means you require more support
- You have complicating (risk) factors which means that you may need additional care during labour
- You are planning to have a caesarean birth, or it is likely you will need one
- You know that your baby is likely to need special care after you give birth
- You would like to have an epidural





# Your preferences

Having discussed your options with your midwifery team, have you decided where you would like to give birth?

Further details of each option can be found on the [NHS website](#).

▶ Home Birth

▶ Midwifery Led Birthing Unit

▶ Delivery Suite

Have you thought about positions during birth? What will help keep you relaxed etc

Have you thought about who you would like to be with you during birth?

Have you thought about having skin to skin with your baby immediately after giving birth? <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/implementing-standards-reources/skin-to-skin-contact/>

Do you know what pain relief options are available and whether these are right for you?

Do you know the benefits of skin-to-skin?

Have you thought about how you wish to feed your baby? Support with feeding will be available after birth, but speak to your midwifery team about your preferences now to best support you during pregnancy and prepare you at birth

Service Options	NNUH	JPH	QEH
<b>Analgesia:</b>			
- Epidural	✓	✓	✓
- Morphine	✓	✓	✓
- Gas and Air (Entonox)	✓	✓	✓
- TENS Machine	✓	✓	✓
- Remifentanil PCA	✓	✓	✓
Antenatal Classes	✓	✓	✓
Antenatal Colostrum Expressing Support	✓	✓	✓
Aromatherapy	✓	✓	✓
Birth Reflections Service	✓	✓	✓
Continuity of Carer	✗	✓	✓
Hypnobirthing Classes	✗	✓	✓
Maternity Phone App	✗	✗	✓
Maternity Notes Online Portal	✗	✗	✓
Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)	✓	<i>From 30 weeks</i>	<i>From 27 weeks</i>
Outpatient Induction of Labour Service	✓	✓	✓
Partners can stay overnight	✓	✗	✓
Pressure Point Treatment	✗	✗	✗
<b>Specialist Midwives:</b>			
- Professional Midwifery Advocates	✓	✓	✓
- Specialist Midwife for Bereavement	✓	✓	✓
- Specialist Midwife for Mental Health	✓	✓	✓
- Women's Experience Midwife	✓	✓	✓
- Specialist Midwife for Diabetes	✓	✓	✓
- Infant Feeding Midwife	✓	✓	✓
- Tongue Tie Services	✓	✓	✓
- Infant Feeding Clinic	✓	✓	✓
Tours of Maternity Unit <small>(some online &amp; some face-to-face)</small>	✓	✓	✓
Vaginal Birth After Caesarean Clinic/ Birth Choices Clinic	✓	✓	✓
Vulnerable Women's Team	✓	✓	✓
Women's Health Physiotherapist	✓	✓	✓

# After your baby is born (Postnatal Care)

Postnatal care is carried out by your community midwife and midwife support workers. This may be in your home or at a clinic.

In the first few days after birth, you will be offered a vitamin K injection or oral supplement for your baby.

## **You will be offered screening tests for your baby that your midwife will talk to you about:**

- A Newborn Infant Physical Examination (NIPE) within the first 72 hours after birth
- Hearing screening
- Blood spot screening where a small sample of blood is checked for some possible genetic problems
- Spending as much time skin-to-skin with your baby after birth will help you and your baby to develop a close, loving bond. It also stimulates your baby's breastfeeding instincts, helps your baby to maintain a steady temperature, blood sugar level and supports brain development.
- Looking after your pelvic floor health is important after giving birth.

Find out about exercises and support in Norfolk and Waveney on [Just One Norfolk](#).

## **Feeding your baby**

The World Health Organisation recommends breastfeeding for your baby's first six months, and then breast milk alongside other food until they are two years and over.

You will receive breastfeeding or infant feeding support from your midwife, maternity support worker, neonatal intensive care team and health visitors.

No matter how you decide to feed your baby, your choice will be respected and you will be supported by trained and caring professionals

## Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the most natural way to feed your new baby.

Breastmilk helps your baby's immune system work and provides protection from infection. Your breastmilk is unique to your baby and changes as they grow. Breastfeeding also reduces your risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer and weak bones in later life.

Breastfeeding is a skill you both need to learn, so don't worry if it doesn't go perfectly at first. Any amount of breast milk is good for your baby's health and wellbeing. Every drop of breastmilk your baby receives counts.

All mums and babies will have a different breastfeeding experience.

You can breastfeed your baby for as long as you want to and there is help to support you throughout your journey.

You can get help from your midwife if your baby is under 28 days old and at any point from the [Healthy Child Programme](#). Call Just One Number on 0300 300 0123 or text Parentline on 07520 631590 to speak to UNICEF trained staff.

### Further breastfeeding advice can be found on:

- The Just One Norfolk [website](#)
- The NHS website under [breastfeeding](#)
- The [UNICEF](#) babyfriendly website
- The National Breastfeeding [helpline](#)

There are also private breastfeeding support services available which may have a cost attached. Further information can be found at Lactation Consultants of Great Britain.

## Infant feeding

You may choose to formula feed, be considering combination feeding with expressed milk or formula, or you may have come to the end of your breastfeeding journey.

Your midwife or health visitor will be able to give you advice on bottle feeding or you can call Just One Number on 0300 300 0123.

You can find information on bottle feeding, including the equipment you need and how to prepare and store feeds on Just One Norfolk.



## Safer Sleep for your baby

After your baby is born it is very important to make sure they are sleeping in a safe way to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), also known as Cot Death.

Please take the time to look at the advice and guidance and watch our videos on how to keep your baby [safe](#) while they are sleeping - and speak to your midwife or health visitor if you have any questions.



## Crying

Crying is part of a baby's language. Crying is normal, but can be hard to deal with. Babies cry most when they are around 6-8 weeks old.

Be careful to always handle your baby gently, never shake them.

Some parents and carers have shaken their babies whilst feeling very stressed and babies have sadly been badly injured or died. It is very important to take a break when you need to.

Please follow this [link](#) to the Just One Norfolk All Babies Cry page. This will help you to understand more about normal crying in babies, when it may not be normal, helpful tips for looking after yourself and where to get support if you are finding your baby's crying very stressful.

Remember - Babies cry and you can cope: <https://iconcope.org/>

- I** Infant Crying is normal
- C** Comforting methods can help
- O** It's OK to walk away
- N** Never, ever shake a baby



For general health and wellbeing support click [here](#)

## Mental Health Support

Having a baby is a big life event. During your pregnancy, birth and in the first few months of parenthood, you may have a lot of different feelings – from excitement about meeting your baby to worries about how you will cope with your new arrival.

For most parents in amongst the happy moments there will be times when it can feel overwhelming – this is very normal.

Your midwife will ask about your feelings and mental health to ensure you get the care and support you need.

## Start for Life

The first 1,001 days from conception up to the age of two are a critical time in the development of your baby and child's life. It is also a time of change within a family's life and can be a time when you or your child may need extra support.

Working with services, parents and carers the Norfolk [Start for Life](#) offer has been developed.

## The Start for Life Vision

*"All babies, children and families are supported and empowered to have a healthy, happy and safe start for life, ensuring they FLOURISH before birth and beyond."*

## The Norfolk Start for Life Offer

The Norfolk [Start for Life](#) offer has information on the services that are provided to all parents and carers to be and for those with children under the age of two. It also provides information on services that are available to you and your family during this period if you need extra support.

## Key Start for Life services are:

- Midwifery
- Health visiting
- Parenting support
- Parental mental health and perinatal infant mental health
- Infant feeding

You can find out more about the Start for Life offer through this [link](#).

## For more information and useful websites for your pregnancy:

- [Just One Norfolk](#)
- Get help to buy food and milk [Healthy Start](#)
- [Which? Guide](#)
- [The Birthplace in England Research Programme](#)
- [NHS Pregnancy Pages](#)
- [Norfolk County Council Children's Health & Wellbeing](#)
- [Baby Buddy](#)
- [Positive Birth Movement](#)
- [Maternity Voice](#)
- Norfolk County Council [Early Childhood](#)
- [Suffolk County Council](#) Children, Families and Learning
- [Screening information in various languages](#)
- <https://www.birthrights.org.uk/>
- [iCash](#)



**Antenatal screening** – tests that will be done whilst you are pregnant and before birth.

**Midwifery-led Birthing Units (MLBU)**, which include rooms with birthing pools, holistic care and is staffed by midwives 24 hours a day.

**Consultant-led care** for expectant parents who need more complex care and support.

**Delivery suites** (these are sometimes referred to as labour wards) with specialist maternity services for giving birth and specialist theatres for women needing caesarean sections.

**Epidural** Epidural anaesthesia blocks pain in a particular region of the body. The goal of an epidural is to provide pain relief, rather than anaesthesia, which leads to total lack of feeling. Epidurals block the nerve impulses from the lower spinal segments.

**Friends and Family Test (FFT)** – The Friends and Family Test (FFT) is a feedback tool that supports the principle that people who use NHS services should have the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience. It asks people if they would recommend the services they have used and offers a range of responses. The FFT provides a method to highlight both good and poor patient experience. This kind of feedback is vital in transforming NHS services and supporting patient choice. Click on the link below for [QEH JPH NNUH](#)

**Midwife-led care** for expectant parents by a highly experienced team of midwives 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Newborn screening** – these are various tests to check health aspects of your baby.

**NHS Choices** – NHS Choices is an NHS website that provides information on services and for maternity, it provides patient information, advice and support for expectant parents and their families. It also includes reviews and ratings from members of the public and this is the data that we have used for the birth centres within this leaflet [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Obstetrician** – Specialist doctor for maternity.

**Personal Care & Support Plan (PCSP)** During pregnancy we encourage every woman to complete their own personal care plans, in partnership with their midwives and/or doctors. Personal care plans help you to explore, understand and record your individual choices for pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.

**Recovery areas or Maternity High Dependency Unit (HDU)** for women who have given birth in theatre or have very complex care needs.

**Special Care Baby Units** and intensive care units/neonatal units for babies requiring continuous medical and nursing care due to prematurity or complex needs.

**Specialist midwife** – A Clinical Midwife Specialist is a highly skilled and experienced registered midwife who has an extended level of independence and works closely with managers and senior clinicians.

**Vitamin K injection for babies** – In the UK, parents of new babies are routinely asked if their baby is to have supplementary vitamin K by injection or oral supplement, which is needed to make blood clot and prevent excessive internal bleeding, if required.





## Local Maternity & Neonatal System



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### Better Births

Version: 3

Date: May 2024

Produced by the Norfolk & Waveney Local Maternity & Neonatal System in association with Norfolk and Waveney ICB, Norfolk & Norwich Hospital, James Paget Hospital, and Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn, Cambridge Community Services and The Maternity Voices Partnerships.

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