

PRENATAL (BEFORE BIRTH) CARE

Description

When you are pregnant you have to visit your local clinic or a professional medical practitioner to check if the baby is growing at the expected or normal rate. It is very important that you visit the clinic as soon as you suspect that you are pregnant.

Steps to follow

You have to make an appointment at your local clinic or midwifery. On the day of your visit the nurse or midwife will:

- ask you about your medical history
- take your blood pressure
- weigh you to work out your body mass index
- test your urine to check for the level of protein which could indicate a pregnancy-related condition called pre-eclampsia
- take blood samples and arrange for you to have a dating scan to find out how many weeks pregnant you are
- feel your womb to get an idea of whether your baby is growing at the expected rate.

Legal framework

This service is provided in terms of the National Health Act, 2003 (Act 61 of 2003) and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

Service standard

- The check-ups may vary from facility to facility, but it is recommended that after the first booking, first time mothers with a normal pregnancy should have 10 more antenatal checks.
- They should be done at 16, 18-20, 25, 28, 31, 34, 36, 38, 40 and 41 weeks (assuming you have no complications).
- Women who have already had a baby, and who have an uncomplicated pregnancy should have seven checks at about 16, 18-20, 28, 34, 36, 38 and 41 weeks. If you are unhappy with long gaps between visits talk to your nurse, midwife or doctor.

Cost

The service is free at local clinics. Public hospitals charge a minimum fee.

Forms to complete

Forms will be available at the clinic and a folder will be created for next visits.