

Pregnancy Options

Fact Sheet

Unintended pregnancy

This Fact Sheet is designed to help in the process of making a decision regarding an unintended pregnancy. The following information provides you with an overview of pregnancy options.

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
- tender and/or bigger breasts
- tingling or tender nipples
- feeling sick and/or tired
- need to pass urine more often
- food cravings.

Having one or more of these signs does not necessarily mean that you are pregnant. It is also possible to be pregnant and 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.

A pregnancy test will take 3 weeks to show a positive result, so it is important not to test too early. If you have tested negative but still feel that you may be pregnant then it is a good idea to repeat the test.

Getting support

It helps to talk to a health professional about your pregnancy if you're not sure about your options. Remember that you don't have to make the decision without support.

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:

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| Pregnancy Birth and Baby Hotline: | 1800 882 436 |
| SHINE SA Sexual Healthline: | 1300 883 793 |
| Toll free (country callers): | 1800 188 171 |
| Pregnancy Advisory Centre: | 08 7117 8999 |
| Toll free (country callers): | 1800 672 966 |

Options

If you have confirmed you are pregnant, you have the following options:

- continue the pregnancy
- have an abortion
- 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. The bottom line is: you need to make the best choice for you in your current situation.

Continuing with a pregnancy

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

Pregnancy, Birth and Baby by the Australian Government is useful resource that can provide advice and guidance from maternal child health nurses on 1800 882 436 or visit their website www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au.

The Child and Family Health Service can also provide information and support for parents in South Australia, call 1300 364 100.

Abortion

You can contact the Pregnancy Advisory Centre for information and referral for abortion services. 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 our website (www.shinesa.org.au).

If you need help in making a decision, counselling is available at SHINE SA or the Pregnancy Advisory Centre (www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/AbortionSupportServices). People who feel they are making their own decision about their pregnancy are more likely to feel positive about the outcome.

Adoption

Adoption is a big decision, but there's lots of support available to help you make a decision. Adoption is a permanent legal arrangement. Parents whose children are adopted permanently give up all their parental rights and responsibilities for their child.

If you are unsure if you are able to parent your child, there are other options available to help ensure your child is cared for. This includes sharing care with family/friends or foster care.

- Foster care is when your child is cared for by another family and includes temporary foster care and long term foster care.
- Alternative care or kinship care is when members of your family or community or friends may agree to look after your child for the short term or agree to raise them.

You can get support and information on adoption and foster care from:

- Adopt Change (www.adoptchange.org.au)
- Department for Child Protection (www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/adoption)
- Relationships Australia South Australia (www.rasa.org.au)

Pregnancy Advisory Centre

Tel 08 7117 8999

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/AbortionSupportServices



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

SHINE SA Appointments and Enquiries

Tel 8300 5300 **Online Bookings** www.shinesa.org.au

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)