



Parenting Adoption Abortion

what shall I choose?

... Becoming a parent

If being pregnant is a shock for you, it can be hard to allow yourself to think about the positive aspects of having a baby. The responsibility can feel unwelcome or even frightening.

Choosing to become a parent might mean looking at some of the difficulties involved. The practical and emotional aspects of managing life with a child may appear overwhelming but becoming a parent can be very rewarding and fulfilling too.

Help is available. You need not be on your own. An advisor from your local pregnancy counselling centre can support you for as long as you wish and help you to build your own support network.

In addition:

- If you have money problems, benefits may be available from the Department for Work and Pensions. See www.dwp.gov.uk for detailed information.
- If you have housing problems, the Local Housing Office can help you.
- You will receive health care from your midwife, GP and health visitor.
- Baby clothes and equipment may be available from your local pregnancy counselling centre.
- It is possible to have a child and return to school, college or work.

... Adoption

Though sometimes dismissed, adoption can be the best choice, not only for your baby, but for you as well. It means that your baby can have the life you want for him or her, with a loving family, even though you are unable to provide it yourself.

What does it mean?

- Adoption means you care about your child, giving them what you are unable to give right now.
- You can say what sort of people you would like to have as parents for your child.
- You can write a letter to your child for them to read as they grow up.
- Through adoption, your child can benefit from a stable family with both a father and a mother.
- Studies show that most adoptions work out happily.

What happens?

- When you are ready, a social worker will visit you to talk about it. You don't need to decide now. You have plenty of time to find out what's best for you and your baby.
- After the birth, the baby goes to foster parents for about 6 weeks. You can visit during this time.
- The baby then goes to live with the adoptive family. After 3 months with them, the adoption order can go through.
- You do not have to go to court – a social worker will visit you and ask you to sign a legal document.
- Once the judge has made an adoption order, it cannot be changed.

Adoption means making a sacrifice on your part for your baby's sake. Adjusting to life post-natally may mean working through difficult emotions like loss and grief. It's important that you have both practical and emotional support when placing your baby in a new family. An advisor from your local pregnancy counselling centre can support you during your pregnancy and for as long as you need after the birth and adoption.

... Abortion

Understanding what's involved in an abortion will help you to make an informed decision.

- Abortions are done for free under the NHS, either in the hospital or in private clinics.
- There are various methods of abortion and you will need to sign a consent form to say that you agree to the procedure.
- If you are under 35 and less than 9 weeks' pregnant, you may be offered a medical abortion. You are given a tablet to take, followed 2 days later by a vaginal pessary. This leads to an abortion within 8-10 hours with symptoms similar to an early miscarriage.
- More usually, up to the 14th week of pregnancy, you are given a general anaesthetic and a suction abortion.
- Later abortions may be done surgically by 'dilatation and evacuation' (opening the cervix and removing the developing baby from the womb) or by induced labour and delivery, but you will have to check this as it varies from area to area.
- Be aware that availability of abortion services varies across the country.

There may be some risks involved:

- Infection
- Bleeding
- Damage to the cervix or womb
- Relative infertility

Afterwards, some women feel an initial sense of relief but, later on, may feel:

- A sense of loss
- Grief
- Guilt or regret
- Anger

Some women also experience: tearfulness, wanting another baby, problems on anniversary dates, relationship problems, bad dreams and problems being near babies.

You are more likely to experience these reactions if:

- You are being pressurized into an abortion.
- You feel you have no choice.
- You have strong motherly feelings.
- You have had depression.
- You have a late abortion for a diagnosed abnormality.
- You don't feel comfortable with the idea of abortion.

It's important that you have both practical and emotional support. An advisor from your local pregnancy counselling centre can help you develop your support network.

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You're a special person

You are a valuable person in your own right. You deserve the dignity of being able to make an informed choice for yourself, having been given all the accurate information and time to think and talk it through with someone you can trust.

Further help is available for you

To help you make an informed decision, you may want to know more about how a baby develops in the womb, as this can affect how you feel about your options. If you want to know the facts, your advisor can give you a leaflet about baby development.

You can ring our national Freephone helpline to speak to a fully trained advisor immediately:

CAREconfidential 0800 028 2228

You can be put in touch with your nearest pregnancy counselling centre where you can speak to an advisor face to face and receive ongoing support.

You can go online to www.careconfidential.com and be in touch with someone confidentially using Online Advisor.

www.careconfidential.com

Ask for the leaflet 'Pregnant? What Now?' to be sent to you or read it online to help you take some steps forward.

