



Our Continuity of Care Programme is the cornerstone of the Know Your Midwife service.

It can begin as early as 8 weeks into your pregnancy and continues through birthing to your sixth week of parenthood. Continuity of Care is about giving you, and your partner, the opportunity to collaborate with a qualified midwife who will get to know you, your circumstances and your aspirations for your birthing experience. She will be with you all the way, guiding and supporting you, giving you access to years of experience and expertise. The programme is based on a roadmap – see below – which lays out how often we'll meet and what we'll be doing

along the way (and between visits there's always the opportunity to discuss things that crop up along the way). It integrates with an array of pregnancy and childbirth educational programmes, outlined later in this document, which are free to expectant mothers joining the programme in advance of their 20th week of pregnancy.

Ultimately, our goal is to help prepare you for the birthing experience you want and deserve.

1ST TRIMESTER, 8-12 WEEKS:

Meet and greet your midwife in your home

Your Body: *During this month you may suffer nausea and constipation, wee a lot as your bladder becomes crowded with the growing uterus, feel tired and your tummy may thicken and feel pregnant. After all, the hormones are changing to grow the foetus and the placenta, that's the body's main focus now!*

Your Baby: *The foetus changes from a cellular prawn shape into a tiny human with ears and hands, eyelids, nose, and the heart completely formed and pumping away, and the internal girl and boy bits forming. It has begun a tiny exercise regime you won't feel yet. The head is big in comparison to the rest of the foetus, the uterus now the size of an orange and the foetus weighing about 18 gms by week 12.*

- Meet the midwife who will work in partnership with you throughout your pregnancy, birth and the 6 week postnatal period.
- This is a 1 hour introductory session at your home, where your midwife takes your medical and pregnancy history and you discuss your expectations, and plan your care.
- You will receive your own Pregnancy Careplan booklet (which you need to have at each antenatal visit). It contains the antenatal physical observations taken by your midwife such as blood pressure and fundal height, as well as the growth, position and heart rate of your baby. Test results and ultrasound reports are also recorded. This information is important for your carers and needs to go to the hospital with you.
- Information concerning antenatal investigations/tests/scans will be discussed with you by your midwife also.
- Hereafter we'll meet every 4 weeks, more often later. (If we began week 8, we'll meet week 12.)
- Participation in the *Fit For Pregnancy, Fit For Life Workshop* can begin anytime now.

2ND TRIMESTER, 16 WEEKS:

1st 4-weekly visit/antenatal check-up at your home.

Your Body: *About 180 mls of amniotic fluid now surrounds your baby. You are carrying more blood than you usually do. The foetus may move and nudge internal organs causing discomfort or "butterflies". Hormones can make you forgetful and tired but it's ok because you're pregnant.*

Your Baby: *Joints, fingers and toes begin to move. Toenails begin to form. The foetus begins growing downy foetal hair called lanugo (which means fine wool in some ancient language). The foetus' weight is approximately 110gms.*

- We'll discuss your general health, blood pressure, the height of the uterus, listen to the foetal heart rate, and help book appointments for foetal growth and anomaly scans (18 - 20 weeks).
- Ultrasounds provide information about the number of babies you're carrying, the baby's age, position and movement, heart rate, amniotic fluid, placenta, and gender.
- Anomaly scans tell us about foetal anatomy; brain and skull, chest cavity and diaphragm, stomach, abdominal cavity and wall, face, kidneys, bladder, arms and legs, genitalia, spine and abnormalities. The placenta site is also checked.
- We'll discuss and book the workshops right for you, plus your self care and lifestyle: nutrition, exercise options like yoga or water aerobics, back care, drugs and supplements, smoking, alcohol, employment and parental leave.
- Discussion will begin on options for birthing, postnatal care, breast care and infant needs.
- Participation in the *Fit For Pregnancy, Fit For Life Workshop* should begin anytime now.



2ND TRIMESTER, 20 WEEKS: *2nd 4-weekly visit/antenatal check-up at your home.*

Your Body: *You may have felt the foetus move. About a third of your weight gain is baby, placenta and amniotic fluid; the rest is your body's response to pregnancy - breast growth and increased blood volume. The body needs to store up fat during pregnancy which will be used in breastfeeding.*

Your Baby: *The foetus puts on more muscle and moves between sleeps. It hears sounds like your voice. Its translucent skin is covered by a thick protective substance, vernix. The foetus weighs about 320 gms.*

- Most of your weight gain will be from the fourth to the seventh month. Although we no longer weigh women at each antenatal check, your midwife will monitor excessive weight gain which can be associated with conditions such as gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, varicose veins, and emerging addictions to chocolate!
- Our ongoing health information and education will continue, with an emphasis on nutrition, maternity clothes, work and posture, and travelling and of course, any concerns you have.
- We'll discuss your scan results.
- And of course we'll do a full antenatal check.
- Participation in the *Fit For Pregnancy, Fit For Life Workshop* should begin now if you haven't already started.

2ND TRIMESTER, 24 WEEKS: *3rd 4-weekly visit/antenatal check-up at your home.*

Your Body: *Some women get heartburn, indigestion, constipation, back ache, cramps, varicose veins and even vivid dreams. On the bright side, hormonal changes might give your skin that pregnancy "glow". Your bladder is a bit squished. Feeling faint may come with changes in blood flow and pressure. Practice contractions (Braxton Hicks) might begin.*

Your Baby: *Is about 21cm from head to bottom. Lungs begin to secrete surfactant enabling them to stay expanded. Eyebrows and hair have grown. The foetus weighs about 630 gms.*

- Antenatal checks, as always.
- Our health information and education continues and might include discussion of the discomforts of pregnancy.
- This is a good time to use the free initial consultation with a chiropractor, Bowen therapist or physiotherapist, naturopath or homeopath to alleviate any discomforts, naturally.
- Booking at the hospital of your choice is organised and a check with the specialist obstetrician. Many expectant mothers ask their midwife to attend this visit with them, which both helps with continuity of care and fosters the best collaboration between the mother, the hospital and the midwife.
- This is the last chance to begin participating in the *Fit For Pregnancy, Fit For Life Workshop* to get the most out of it.

3RD TRIMESTER, 28 WEEKS: *5th 4-weekly visit/antenatal check-up at your home.*

Your Body: *Your uterus stretches and is beginning to move up squishing your ribs (you may need to eat smaller more frequent meals). To rise easily from a lying position, try turning on your side first and then pushing yourself up into a sitting position. Tiredness, haemorrhoids, insomnia and pregnancy rashes and itches may occur.*

Your Baby: *The foetus weighs about 1kg having put on more fat and muscle. It has definite sleep and awake periods, can detect light, even through its still closed eyelids, can smell and taste and may even get hiccups!*

- Antenatal checks, as always.
- You're finally ready for the "third act" – the final trimester of your pregnancy.
- On the health information and education front, we will discuss the wellbeing of your baby by being aware of foetal activity and any changes that could take place and what to do, the signs of premature labour and what to do, general health and wellbeing concerns or hassles that might emerge in the third trimester. We will also look at baby preparations, clothes, equipment and getting the hospital bag prepared!
- Blood Glucose testing is organised at this check up - you'll do this at a local pathology lab. Some form of glucose testing is used antenatally to diagnose gestational diabetes. It is done after 20 weeks as the anti-insulin effect of the placental hormones is present.
- Participation in the *Labour, Birth and Parenting Preparation Workshop* can begin anytime now.
- Expectant mothers contemplating a vaginal delivery having previously had a caesarean can now participate in the *Vaginal Birthing After A Caesarean Workshop*.



3RD TRIMESTER, 32 WEEKS:

Your Body: Finding a comfy position to sleep can be tricky. Lying on your left side, rather than your back, can help the blood supply to the placenta. You may feel breathless due to your lungs being squished – take it easy and rest more. Hands and feet may begin to swell so keep up the fluids.

Your Baby: Research shows that your foetus is already very intelligent – alert and responsive to all going on around it, inside and outside the uterus. The lungs are just about ready to go it alone should the foetus be born.

6th 4-weekly visit/antenatal check-up at your home.

- Antenatal checks, as always.
- We'll discuss birth planning, labour, medical complications and the antenatal classes.
- Participation in the *Labour, Birth and Parenting Preparation Workshop* can begin anytime now.
- Expectant mothers contemplating a vaginal delivery having previously had a caesarean can now participate in the *Vaginal Birthing After A Caesarean Workshop*.

3RD TRIMESTER, 36 WEEKS:

Your Body: You've tired, retaining fluid and might feel breathless or dizzy. You may have gone up a shoe size. It's time to get that feeding bra! You may get some aches and pains like stitch. Pelvic ligaments loosen. Foetal movements are sensed as the baby's head moves around low in the pelvis.

Your Baby: The foetus, now about 2.5 kg, can focus it's eyes on things like it's extremities and umbilical cord. It is busy practising sucking, breathing, blinking, turning the head, grabbing things and stretching out it's legs - even if it's a bit cramped.

7th 4-weekly visit/antenatal check-up at your home.

- This is our last 4-weekly visit...from heronin we'll meet at least week.
- Antenatal check, as always.
- A full Blood Count test is organised.
- Now is the time to be taking the active childbirth workshop and signs of labour, breathing techniques and birthplans are revised.
- Time to see alternative therapists in preparation for the birth. (if you are going to) and look at natural ways to induce labour if baby is late.
- Expectant mothers contemplating a vaginal delivery having previously had a caesarean can now participate in the *Vaginal Birthing After A Caesarean Workshop*.
- Participation in the *Active Birthing Workshop and Breastfeeding Workshop* can begin anytime now.

3RD TRIMESTER, 37-39 WEEKS: Weekly visit/antenatal check-ups at your home.

Your Body: Around this time your breasts may decide to leak whenever they hear a baby! Rest as much as you can so you have energy for labour. Braxton hicks may become more frequent. The baby's head drops into the pelvis making walking uncomfortable. You may start "nesting" to get things ready – no climbing wobbly ladders now! By 38 weeks you are now in your "birthing month" and technically full term. At any time you may release the "mucous" plug from around the cervix as it becomes softer and thinner. Labour could begin any day and you may have "practice contractions" "for a few hours a day"

Your Baby: From 37 – 40 weeks all the foetus is really doing is putting on weight and moving in a much more limited way each day. The lanugo is all but gone but there's still some vernix. The bowel is full of meconium and that comes out once feeding is established. The lungs are ready to work on their own now. The foetus positions itself for birth during these weeks. Weight increase from approx 2.7kg-3.4kg during these weeks

- Antenatal checks, as always at each visit.
- Hospital visit with an obstetrician at 39 – 40 weeks
- Expectations of labour and birth are revisited as much as you like and a birth plan should be taken to the hospital for their/your file.
- We'll discuss again your postnatal stay in hospital and whether you'd like early discharge home from hospital with your midwife to stay for 12 hours overnight or a few hours during that discharge day.
- We'll revise the signs of labour and the breathing and relaxation techniques to use during labour
- The timing and need for induction will be discussed along with the alternatives to try at home or with different therapists such as acupuncture, chiropractor, osteopath, hypnotherapist, homeopathy...should you choose one
- If a caesarean is indicated through these weeks, or before, we'll revise your plan to ensure your surgical birth is a positive, gentle experience with immediate bonding with your baby where possible.
- Participation in the *Active Birthing and Breastfeeding Workshops* can begin anytime now.
- Expectant mothers expecting a caesarean can now participate in the *Positive Caesarean Workshop*.



3RD TRIMESTER, 40 WEEKS:

The Role Of A Doula:

Under current Government legislation your midwife may go with you to your hospital and care for you in the role of a doula. The word doula comes from the ancient Greek meaning “a woman who serves” and is now used to refer to a trained and experienced professional who provides continuous physical, emotional and informational support to the mother before, during and after the birth, as well as in the postnatal period.

** We are negotiating legislative changes to allow Independent Midwives to act as your legally responsible midwife in the hospital in which you birth.*

You Have Arrived; It's Your Birth Day.

- Your last antenatal check will be conducted by the obstetrician at your chosen hospital. Your midwife will offer to attend this visit with you. Your visits to the hospital will now be weekly. It is likely the obstetrician may recommend a CTG each week and induction may be discussed.
- Your midwife is a trained professional who has known you throughout your pregnancy, knows your mindset, your expectations, your concerns, your birth plan and with your partner, can help you work with your body and baby to achieve the birthing experience you prepared for. At the hospital and your midwife helps care for you during birthing in the role of a doula, assisting you in your emotional and physical needs. She will help guide and comfort you during birthing. She will help with communication between you and your legal caregivers - the hospital - and help you get the information you need to make informed decisions and assists your partner participate at his/her comfort level. Rather than reducing your partner's participation during labour, your midwife's support will compliment and reinforce his/her role, allowing their contribution to the labour and birth become meaningful and helpful.

GOING HOME:

Transitioning To Parents:

The transition to parenthood at home is both joyful but is also something that brings with it many new experiences, decisions and a whole host of 'how do we...?' questions. Your midwife's partnership doesn't end at birthing. She will join you in the transition to parenting at home during those all important first six weeks of infancy.

The First 6 Weeks.

- When you go home your midwife will remain by your side.
- She will visit you everyday for the first 5 days (and can even stay with you during the first night if you find this helpful).
- In the second week she will visit you at home twice, and thereafter every week until six weeks postnatal.
- During these visits your midwife can offer non judgemental breastfeeding advice and support, assist in newborn care and education and advice on family adjustments.
- She will weigh and measure your baby weekly.
- You will have a postnatal physical assessment, and ongoing education for early parenthood.
- At discharge from your midwife's care at 6 weeks, you will be offered a GP or Paediatrician check up for your baby.



*For further information about our service on the Sunshine Coast;
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