Having a Baby in the Great Southern
Acknowledgements etc.
Having a baby is one of life’s great journeys. Making decisions about your pregnancy the type of birth you want and postnatal care are some of the many important choices you and your family will make on the path to parenthood.

Sifting through the options can be an exciting but daunting task. WA Health's 'Having a baby' website is a one-stop source of information about services across WA relating to maternity care, birth and parenthood. In addition to detailing care options and listing support organisations, the website also includes information for Aboriginal women and their families as well as information in languages other than English. For more information visit www.health.wa.gov.au/havingababy.

This information booklet contains information about services and options within the Great Southern, Western Australia.
Before becoming pregnant

If you are thinking about pregnancy, visit your doctor for a check-up. They will provide you with expert advice on planning your pregnancy. The preconception period (three months prior to pregnancy) is the time to make life changes for you and your partner that can help boost fertility, reduce problems during pregnancy and assist in recovery from birth.

During pregnancy

Most doctors will provide pregnancy (antenatal) care for women, and in the Central Great Southern there is the option to have shared antenatal care with a community midwife. The GP services available are listed in the table at the back of this booklet, and the community midwifery service is located in Katanning. You can self-refer to either service.

With the assistance of your GP or midwife you will need to decide where you will give birth and whether you want to have a midwife, GP-obstetrician or obstetrician provide care during pregnancy and birth. Your decision will be influenced by the availability of services close to home, your ability and willingness to travel, and any specific health issues or needs. By half-way through your pregnancy, you should be booked into a birthing hospital and have your first appointment with the GP, obstetrician or midwifery service which will be caring for you and your baby during birth.

If you have to travel more than 100km to access the nearest antenatal or birthing services, you may be eligible for Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) payments which cover some of the costs. You can find out more about PATS from your local hospital.

You will also want to consider booking into antenatal education classes. The hospital where you book to have your baby will usually provide
classes, and you can also attend videoconference classes. These are provided by midwives from the Great Southern Health Services, and you can join in at a hospital or health service near your home. Call **Albany Health Campus 9892 2222** or Katanning **Hospital 9821 6222** for more information.

It is a good idea to meet your local Child Health Nurse and other mothers while you are pregnant. This will make it easier to know how to find support after you have your baby. The Child Health Nurse contact details are listed at the back of this booklet, and the nurse can let you know about local mothers’ groups and Australian Breastfeeding Association groups.

There are also lots of websites and apps to help you learn more about pregnancy and birth. Look for ones which are supported by a
recognised health service. There’s a list of these at the back of this booklet.

As you may be receiving care from a number of health professionals during and after your pregnancy, it is a good idea to have a Hand Held Pregnancy Record and take it with you to every appointment. These are available from your GP, midwife, birthing hospital and child health nurse.

If you have health problems before or during your pregnancy, you may need additional care from an obstetrician and other specialists. Information on when things don’t go as planned is available on the ‘Having a baby’ link:

Labour and birth

Albany and Narrogin hospitals provide care for labour and birth, with GP-obstetricians and midwives providing maternity care. If you’d like to know more about having your baby at one of these hospitals, you can contact Albany Health Campus on 9892 2222 and Narrogin Regional Hospital on 9881 0333. The maternity staff can let you know which GP-obstetricians provide services, and about midwife-led antenatal clinics and education.

No other Great Southern hospitals provide birthing services, and there are no publicly funded home birth services in the Great Southern. You may be eligible to have your baby at Fiona Stanley Hospital or Armadale Kelmscott District Memorial Hospital (details at back of booklet).

King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEMH) is WA’s tertiary referral centre for complex pregnancies and high risk births. You may be referred to KEMH by your GP, obstetrician or midwifery service if you need a level of service which is not available at a smaller hospital.

KEMH also operates the Family Birth Centre which provides a comfortable home-like environment with midwife-led care. You will need to have somewhere to stay in Perth after a birth at the Family Birth Centre, and places are limited so early book-in is recommended.

If you choose to have your baby at a private hospital in Perth, you will need to find a doctor who has admitting rights at that hospital. It is recommended that you ask both the doctor and the hospital about charges, and find out what is covered by your private health fund.

If you live more than 1-2 hours’ drive from your birthing facility, or if there is a medical reason why you should be closer to a maternity hospital, you may need to relocate to temporary accommodation up to four weeks
before your due date. It is best to discuss this with your GP, obstetrician or midwifery service early to give you time to make arrangements. Accommodation is available adjacent to KEMH for women with high-risk pregnancies, but you will need to arrange your own accommodation for other hospitals. You may be eligible for PATS payments, but these do not cover all costs. A PATS information pamphlet is available from your local health service.

From a public metropolitan maternity hospital, following a normal birth, you will usually be discharged 24 hours after the birth. Provided the baby is healthy, the mother and baby will go home together.
After your baby is born: 0-6 weeks

Most mothers will be home with their new baby within the first day or two after birth. This can be a challenging time as you adjust to a new routine and learn about your baby. There are also a number of health checks required for both mother and baby during the first ten days after birth. There are home-visiting midwifery services in the Great Southern but, depending on where you live, they may be limited. It is a good idea to talk to the staff at your birthing hospital before discharge, to make sure there is a plan to help you access these checks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postnatal care</th>
<th>Local availability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What health services you’ll need to access</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Newborn Hearing Screening</td>
<td>This should be completed as soon as possible after birth (cannot be completed in first 6 hours of babies life). If not completed in birthing hospital, tell your Community Midwife or Child Health Nurse and they’ll arrange for an appointment locally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newborn Bloodspot Screening</td>
<td>This should be completed between 48 and 72 hours after birth. If not completed in hospital, contact your community midwife, local hospital or Child Health Nurse as the blood sample can be collected at some Great Southern Hospitals or during a Child Health Nurse home visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding advice/assistance</td>
<td>If you need help once you get home, your Community Midwife or Child Health Nurse will be able to assist, but they are not available seven days a week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postnatal care</td>
<td>You can call the Australian Breastfeeding Association helpline on 1800 686 268 for free telephone support seven days a week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postnatal physical check - mother</td>
<td>You do need regular postnatal checks after giving birth to make sure your baby is gaining weight and that you are recovering without complications. The Community Midwife will see you until the fifth day, longer if there are any problems. The Child Health Nurse will usually visit you at home within 10 days of birth, but these nurses are not always midwives. Talk to your Community Midwife, Child Health Nurse or local hospital during pregnancy, so that you know what is locally available and can make arrangements for your postnatal check. If you’ve had a caesarean section, you will not be able to drive for at least two weeks (and up to six weeks) after the birth. If you live far from the birth hospital, remember to discuss options and arrange access to postnatal care before you are discharged. See your local doctor 6-8 weeks after the birth of your baby to discuss: contraception, any follow up blood tests, any issues with your bladder, bowels or stitches, and a health assessment and immunisations for your baby.</td>
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Postnatal care

| Weight and physical check - baby | Community Midwives and Child Health Nurses will check your baby's weight during a home visit and make sure your baby is well and developing normally. |

Postnatal information

The following information is provided to assist you during your first days at home.

Problems and Concerns:
- If you or your baby suddenly becomes ill (e.g. breathing problems or raised temperature for baby) please phone your doctor or closest emergency department.

Signs to report
- Any concerns with your baby
- Any feeding problems with your baby

Your uterus returns to normal size in 6 weeks. Let your midwife or doctor know if any of the following signs occur:
- Increased bleeding
- Offensive vaginal discharge
- Abdominal or calf pain
- Passing clots
- Painful stitches
- Breast pain or pain when passing urine

The contractions or ‘after pains’ you get after the birth can be very uncomfortable, especially while breastfeeding. These contractions help your uterus shrink back to its normal size. If you are finding these contractions very painful you can try putting a hot pack on your tummy or
taking a mild analgesic such as paracetamol. This will not affect your breast milk.

**Tiredness**

The birth of a new baby is a wonderful time but tiredness is a problem that most mothers encounter. To combat tiredness we suggest that you try to have a rest period each day. You may find putting a ‘do not disturb mother and baby sleeping’ sign on your front door may help, as well turning the volume of your phone down or off. If you had low iron during your pregnancy, continue taking your iron tablets and discuss this when you visit your doctor at 6 weeks.

**Breastfeeding**

Breastfeeding gives you a great opportunity to be close to your new baby. Breastfeeding on demand will increase your milk supply. Be guided by your midwife regarding baby’s feeding needs.

Make sure you drink lots of water and eat a snack during each feed. Your community midwife can provide you with information regarding your diet while breastfeeding.

**Bowel motions (dirty nappies)**

Frequent loose bowel motions can be normal for breastfed babies. Sometimes the motion is little more than a stain. It is normal for some babies to have bowel motions at each feed and for others to go five days or more. Completely breastfed babies do not become constipated. Early bowel movements are dark green or blackish in colour. After your breast milk comes in, the baby’s stools change to green and then yellow. If you are concerned about constipation in your bottle-fed baby, please contact your midwife, child health nurse or doctor.
Wet Nappies

Once your milk is in by the end of baby’s first week, your baby should have six or more wet nappies a day and this is your assurance that your baby is getting enough milk.

Cord Care

It may take up to 10 days for baby’s cord to separate. During this time there may be some dark old blood around the cord stump. This can be a normal part of the process of the cord separating. Just clean with a damp cottonwool ball or bud. Other than this, the cord only needs to be wiped dry with a cottonwool ball following the baby’s bath. If there is redness of the skin around the base of the cord or an offensive odour, inform your midwife.

Care of your stitches and grazes

You should change your pad frequently. The perineum (the area between your vagina and anus) should be cleansed at least twice a day and after bowel motions. This may be done with a hand held shower, or sitting on the toilet and washing the perineum with a jug of warm water. Dry your perineum from front to back with a clean towel or pad. Do not use tampons for at least six weeks.

You and your partner

Each day you should spend some time sharing the day’s happenings with your family. If your partner has taken time off work, this should be spent with you and the baby and not solely on domestic matters. Keep in mind that you may experience episodes of mood swings and that this
can be normal in the first few weeks after having a baby. Share workloads, joys and responsibilities of a new family member.

After your baby is born: 10 days to 4 years

By the time your baby is 10 days old, you should have connected with your Child Health Nurse who will continue to assess your baby’s growth and development at scheduled times. The Child Health Nurse will also provide information about many aspects of parenting, maternal and family health, and healthy lifestyles. You can also arrange for immunisation of your baby/child by the Child Health Nurse.

As well as looking after your baby, you need to look after yourself. So remember the six week postnatal check with your doctor.

Local services are listed on the following pages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>GP</th>
<th>Midwifery service</th>
<th>Child Health Clinic</th>
<th>Closest hospital (no birthing service unless specified)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>Albany Medical Centre 9841 8455 The Surgery 9842 5900 Southern Regional Medical Group 9845 9000 Pioneer Health 9842 2882</td>
<td>Albany Health Campus 9892 2222</td>
<td>Albany Child Health Clinic 9841 6157</td>
<td>Albany Health Campus 9892 2222 Birthing service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bremer Bay</td>
<td>Priority Medi Centre</td>
<td>Nil – see Albany</td>
<td>Child Health Clinic -</td>
<td>Bremer Bay Health Centre</td>
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<td>9835 1050 Dr Milan Roemer Visits on Tues &amp; Thurs</td>
<td>Jerramungup 9835 1004</td>
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<td>9837 4026</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broomehill</td>
<td>Refer to Katanning</td>
<td>Community Midwife 9821 6358</td>
<td>Katanning Child Health Mon - Thurs 9821 1881 0459 247 382 Fax: 9821 2680</td>
<td>Katanning Hospital 9821 6222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cranbrook</td>
<td>Visiting GP from Plantagenet Medical Centre – fortnightly on Weds. 9892 1000</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Child Health Clinic 9851 1451</td>
<td>Plantagenet Cranbrook Health Service 9892 1222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Denmark Medical Centre 9848 4111 Dr James’ Surgery 9848 1410</td>
<td>Denmark Hospital 9848 0600</td>
<td>Child Health Clinic 9848 0616</td>
<td>Denmark Hospital 9848 0600</td>
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<td>Frankland</td>
<td>Plantagenet Medical Centre 9892 1000 Fortnightly – Tues</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Frankland Child Health Clinic 9851 1451</td>
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<td>Gnowangerup</td>
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<td>Town</td>
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<td>Shire Medical Practice 9827 1116 Dr Wole Oluyede</td>
<td>Midwife 9821 6358 Boodjarri Yorga Midwife (Aboriginal Service): 9821 6370</td>
<td>Thursdays 9827 1334</td>
<td>Hospital 9827 2222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hopetoun</td>
<td>Dr Hermanus Lochner 9838 1600 Nil</td>
<td>Wednesdays For bookings, ring Ravensthorpe Hospital 9838 2211</td>
<td>Ravensthorpe Hospital 9838 2211</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerramungup</td>
<td>Priority Medi Centre 9835 1050 Dr Milan Roemer Nil</td>
<td>Child Health Clinic Tuesdays 9835 1004</td>
<td>Albany Health Campus 9892 2222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katanning</td>
<td>St Luke’s Family Practice 9821 2155 Katanning Surgery 9821 8955 Community Midwife 9821 6358 Boodjarri Yorga Midwife (Aboriginal Service): 9821 6370</td>
<td>Mon-Thurs 9821 1881 0459 247 382</td>
<td>Katanning Hospital 9821 6222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kojonup</td>
<td>St Luke’s Family Practice 9831 0622 Community Midwife 9821 6358 Boodjarri Yorga Midwife (Aboriginal Service): 9821 6370</td>
<td>Thurs and 4th and 5th Wed of the month 9831 2262 0438 532 425 Fax: 9831 2250</td>
<td>Kojonup Hospital 9831 2222</td>
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<td>Town</td>
<td>GP</td>
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<td>Mt Barker</td>
<td>Plantagenet Medical Centre 9892 1000</td>
<td>Albany Health Campus 9892 2222</td>
<td>Child Health Nurse 9851 1451</td>
<td>Plantagenet Cranbrook Health Service 9892 1222</td>
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<td>Nyabing /Pingrup</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Community Midwife 9821 6358</td>
<td>Nyabing: 3rd Wed of the month PH – 9829 1195 0438 569 316 Pingrup: 4th Wed of the month PH – 9820 1005 0438 569 316 Fax: 9823 5009</td>
<td>Katanning Hospital 9821 6222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ravensthorpe</td>
<td>Dr Hermanus Lochner 9838 1600</td>
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<td>Ravensthorpe Hospital 9838 2211</td>
<td>Ravensthorpe Hospital 9838 2211</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tambellup</td>
<td>Tambellup Health Centre GP every second Weds 9825 1101</td>
<td>Community Midwife 9821 6358</td>
<td>Refer to Kojonup Child Health Clinic 1st and 3rd Weds of the month</td>
<td>Katanning Hospital 9821 6222</td>
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<td>Boodjarri Yorga Midwife (Aboriginal Service): 9821 6370</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walpole</td>
<td>Walpole Health Centre 9840 0900</td>
<td>Albany Health Campus 08 9892 2222</td>
<td>Child Health Centre Silver Chain Nursing Post 9840 0900</td>
<td>Denmark Hospital 9848 0600 Walpole Health Centre 9840 0900</td>
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<td>Danish Hospital 9848 0600</td>
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<td>Woodanilling</td>
<td>Refer to Katanning</td>
<td>Community Midwife 9821 6358</td>
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<td>Katanning Hospital 9821 6222</td>
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<td>Midwife (Aboriginal Service): 9821 6370</td>
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### Websites and apps

**For general help and information about pregnancy and related health issues:**

a) **Online Pregnancy information**

   www.bornonline.com.au  
   www.mindthebump.org.au  
   [The Bump WA](https://thebumpwa.org.au/)

b) **Information on perinatal mood disorders and postnatal depression**

   Beyond Blue support service  
   www.beyondblue.org.au  
   [Beat baby blues](http://beatbabyblues.com.au)  
   [Black dog institute](http://blackdoginstitute.org.au)

c) **Information about pregnancy and birth**
d) Breastfeeding information

Australian Breastfeeding Association
(https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au)

e) Information in other languages


f) Early parenting information

WA Immunisation
(http://www.health.wa.gov.au/health_index/i/immunisation.cfm)

www.ngala.com.au

g) Sexual Assault / Family domestic violence information

Birthing hospitals

Narrogin Regional Hospital 9881 0333
Albany Health Campus 9892 2222
St John of God Midland Public Hospital 9462 4000
Armadale Kelmscott Memorial Hospital 9391 2000
King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEMH) 9340 2222
KEMH- Family Birth Centre 9340 2222
Joondalup Health Campus 9400 9400
Fiona Stanley Hospital 6152 2222

Attadale Private Hospital
21 Hislop Rd, Attadale, 6156
9330 1000

Glengarry Private Hospital
53 Arnisdale Rd, Duncraig, 6023
9447 0111

St John of God Mt Lawley Hospital (formerly Mercy Hospital)
Thirlmere Rd, Mt Lawley, 6050
9370 9222

Peel Health Campus
110 Lakes Rd, Mandurah, 6210
9531 8000
St John of God Health Care Bunbury
Bussell Hwy, Bunbury, 6230
9722 1600

St John of God Health Care Geraldton
Hermitage St, Geraldton, 6530
9965 8888

St John of God Health Care Murdoch
100 Murdoch Drv, Murdoch, 6150
9366 1111

St John of God Health Care Subiaco
175 Cambridge St, Subiaco, 6008
9382 6111