

Pregnancy Care

Maternity and Infant Care Scheme

Malahide Family Practice is proud to be part of the HSE Maternity and Infant Care Scheme providing an agreed programme of care **free of charge**, to all expectant mothers who are ordinarily resident in Ireland and to her new born baby for 6 weeks after birth. It is a system of combined care, split between your chosen family doctor (GP) and the maternity unit/hospital obstetrician of your choice.

Antenatal visits – check-ups during your pregnancy

When your pregnancy is confirmed by one of our GP's, the GP will provide you with an application form for the Maternity and Infant Care Scheme, which both you and the GP complete together. The form will be posted and processed in the Local Health Office to confirm your inclusion in the scheme. A referral letter will also be sent to the Maternity Section Hospital of your choice.

Having antenatal check-ups is an important part of staying healthy and can help the doctor monitor your pregnancy for potential problems. If you are expecting your 1st child, you are covered for up to **6 antenatal examination appointments** to the GP during your pregnancy. All 2nd and subsequent pregnancies are covered for up to **7 antenatal examination appointments** to the GP. If you suffer from a significant illness, e.g. diabetes or hypertension, you may require more frequent visits and special care, up to 5 additional visits may be provided.

Week of Pregnancy	GP Visit	Hospital Visit
Before 12 weeks (preferably ASAP after conception)	*	
Before 20 weeks		*
24 weeks	*	
28 weeks	*	*
	(2nd/subsequent pregnancies)	(1st pregnancy)
30 week	*	
32 weeks		*
34 weeks	*	
36 weeks		*
37 weeks	*	
38 weeks		*
39 weeks	*	
40 weeks		*
Birth of Baby		
2 weeks after birth (for baby)	*	
6 weeks after birth (for mother and baby)	*	

Antenatal screening for Mother & Baby include:



- Monitoring your blood pressure
- Testing your urine (to avoid delays, please bring a urine specimen with you to each antenatal appointment. Urine containers are available in the surgery)
- Measuring your weight to ensure appropriate weight gain
- Abdominal palpitation to check your baby's position
- Measuring symphysis-fundal height (SFH) to assess baby's growth
- Checking your legs, arms or face for any swelling
- Listening to your baby's heart rate using a handheld Doppler ultrasound device which amplifies your baby's heartbeat after 20 weeks
- Discussion of vaccination in pregnancy
- Breastfeeding advice and support
- Health promotion advice in the areas of nutrition and the avoidance of alcohol, drugs and smoking

You should have your PPS number with you at this first visit as it is used to register your pregnancy with the HSE. We will also give you a letter for your chosen hospital and you will need to contact the hospital out-patients to arrange your first antenatal visit (see below).

If you are an existing patient of the practice these visits are free of charge. If you are a new patient to the practice, the first visit will include registration and a general health check and will incur a consultation fee. This combined antenatal care scheme is available to all expectant mothers who are ordinarily resident in Ireland over a year and have a PPS number.

Visits to the surgery not covered under the scheme

The scheme does not provide cover for other routine medical appointments, which are not part of a routine antenatal checks.

Appointment Type	Non-medical card holders	Medical card holders
General Consultations (not antenatal visits)	€65.00	No charge
Flu Vaccine (Influenza)	FREE	No charge, sign a vaccination consent form
Pertussis Vaccine (Whooping cough)	FREE	FREE
MMR Vaccine (measles mumps rubella)	€45.00	€45.00
Medical Certificates for Work	€20.00	€20.00

Postnatal visits – check-ups after your pregnancy

The scheme provides for **2 post-natal examination appointments** to the GP after the birth of your baby to provide an opportunity to meet you and your baby:

1st Visit – within 2 weeks of birth

- Developmental check for baby within 2 weeks of birth (15 min appointment)

2nd Visit – at 6 weeks of age (Double appointment)

- Developmental check for baby at 6 weeks old (15 min appointment)
- Check for mother 6 weeks postnatal (15 min appointment)

Please take the time to fill out a registration form for your baby to register your baby's detail at the practice. An appointment can be arranged at reception for your baby's 2 months vaccinations.

Cervical Screening during and after pregnancy

Applying for your child's Medical Card or GP Visit Card under 6

If you have a medical card, the surgery have the facility to add your baby to your family medical card if you are if you are person in receipt of Child Benefit for them. A letter will be issued to you from the medical card section confirming the addition of the child as a dependant under your Medical Card. Further details will be requested from you i.e. copy of: birth certificate, PPSN letter and your medical card.

If you are not eligible for a medical card, you can register your child for a GP Visit Card for children under 6 to avail of free doctor visits at our surgery. Register your child online www.gpvisitcard.ie with **Dr. Claire Fitzsimmons** or **Dr. Joanne Daly**.

HEALTHY EATING DURING PREGNANCY

A well-balanced diet is important for good health, not only during pregnancy but even before conception. This ensures you have a good store of nutrients to meet the demands of your developing baby. Contrary to popular belief, you do not need to consume twice the amount of food that you usually do – it's the quality of what you eat, not always the quantity that is important.

What is a healthy diet? A good general rule is to cut down on sugar, fat and salt and eat more fresh fruit, vegetables and high fibre cereals. If you are already on a special diet for medical reasons, make sure to consult your doctor or dietitian. The table below provides guidelines to help you meet your requirements.

Healthy foods to enjoy:

Group 1 : Meat, Fish and other proteins – 3 servings daily for protein and iron. One serving is:

- 50g cooked lean meat or poultry
- 75g cooked fish
- 2 eggs
- 200ml cup of cooked beans, peas or pulses

Group 2 : Milk and Dairy – 5 servings daily for calcium, vitamins, minerals and protein. One serving is :

- 200 ml (1/3 pint) low-fat milk (vitamin D fortified)
- 25g Light cheddar cheese
- 1 small bowl cottage cheese
- 125g low fat yoghurt

Group 3 : Cereal, breads and other starches – 6-9 servings daily for vitamins, minerals, energy and fibre. One serving is:

- 1 small bowl breakfast cereal (wholegrain)
- 1 medium potato or yam
- 3 dessertspoons cooked pasta or rice
- 1 slice of bread (preferably wholegrain)
- 1 small pitta, chappati or naan

Group 4 : Fruit and Vegetables – more than 5 servings daily for vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fibre. One serving is:

- 125 ml unsweetened fruit juice
- 1 medium piece of fresh fruit or two small ones
- 3 dessertspoons cooked fruit or vegetables
- 1 bowl homemade vegetable soup
- Small bowl of salad greens

Healthy fats

Use mainly monounsaturated and polyunsaturated oils in cooking, such as olive, rapeseed and safflower oils. Use small amounts of butter and enjoy nuts, seeds, oily fish and avocado as heart-healthy additions.

Do not skip meals!

Always take regular meals and snacks, evenly spaced throughout the day, to ensure you are able to eat all the foods you need and keep your energy up.

Important Nutrients

Iron is necessary for healthy blood. Good dietary sources include meat, fish, poultry and egg yolks, green leafy vegetables, fortified breakfast cereals, peas, beans, and lentils. In addition, foods rich in *Vitamin C* such as citrus fruits (oranges or grapefruits) can help the absorption of iron from your food, whereas strong tea or coffee can prevent it. Because of the high requirements of iron during pregnancy, your doctor may prescribe iron tablets for you, if necessary.

Folate and Folic acid is a vitamin essential for the formation and healthy growth of cells in your baby's body and can help prevent some birth defects, such as Spina Bifida. Folate is found in dark green leafy vegetables, Bovril and Marmite. Folic acid is found in fortified breakfast cereals and breads. Women are advised to take folic acid supplements until 12 weeks, and some women may be advised to continue throughout pregnancy.

Calcium is essential for the development of healthy teeth and bones. Good dietary sources include milk, yoghurt, and cheese. Smaller amounts are found in green vegetables and softened bones of tinned fish like sardines and salmon. If you don't like milk, cheese or yoghurt, discuss alternative sources with your doctor or dietitian.

Vitamin D is important for calcium absorption. Eggs, fortified milk and margarines, fortified breakfast cereals and oily fish such as salmon, sardines, herring and tuna are good sources of Vitamin D. Your body also makes Vitamin D from sunlight in summer months, so try to spend some time outdoors.

Omega-3 has been shown to improve babies' brain development. The best source is oily fish, e.g. salmon, trout, mackerel, kippers and herring. Flaxseed and linseed contain Omega-3 but they also affect hormones and the ideal amounts are unknown.

Common Problems During Pregnancy

Morning sickness, despite its name, can occur at any time during the day for the first 12 to 15 weeks. Small frequent meals throughout the day may help. Take dry food, such as dry toast without butter, or plain biscuits. Sip fluids slowly throughout the day and suck on ice-cubes or ice-pops.

Constipation is a common problem and can be relieved by regular exercise and increasing your combined fibre and fluid intake. High fibre foods include wholegrain breakfast cereals, wholemeal bread, whole-wheat pasta, wholegrain rice, fruit and vegetables. *Raw bran is best avoided as it can interfere with the absorption of important nutrients.* Drink at least 8 to 10 cups of fluid daily including water, unsweetened fruit juices, but drink tea or coffee in moderation.

Heartburn may be a problem, especially during the end of pregnancy. Eating small, frequent meals and avoiding large meals late at night will help. Avoid spicy and fatty foods, fizzy drinks. Milky foods may help alleviate the symptoms. Try to relax at mealtimes.

A Guide to Weight Gain

Everyone has different energy and weight gain requirements in pregnancy, depending on pre-pregnancy weight. The best guide is your rate of weight gain and appetite. Recommended weight gain is between 6.8 to 15.9 kg (about 1 to 2.5 stone) for a single baby. It will be more if you are underweight, carrying twins or multiple babies. Most of your weight gain will occur in the last half of pregnancy (just under half a kilo or one pound each week if your weight is normal).

If you are gaining too much weight or gaining it too quickly, cut down on fried and fatty foods, sweets, cakes, biscuits and sugary foods and drinks. These foods have loads of calories but little nutrition. Focus on the food groups at the beginning of this factsheet. ***Do not try to lose weight when you are pregnant.***

Foods to Avoid

Some foods should be avoided during pregnancy because they can contain bacteria, high levels of Vitamin A or other toxins, like mercury, that may be harmful to you and your unborn baby.

- Avoid soft boiled or raw eggs, e.g. in homemade mayonnaise, mousse or cheesecake.
- Do not take cod liver oil.
- Avoid soft, mould-ripened or unpasteurized cheeses like Camembert, Brie, Stilton, blue cheese. It is safe to eat pasteurized and fresh cheddar, Blarney, Mozzarella, Edam and Parmesan cheeses, cottage cheese and cream cheese.
- Limit all caffeine containing drinks (coffee, tea, colas, energy drinks) to 3 or 4 a day.
- Avoid soft, whipped ice cream.
- Avoid swordfish, marlin, shark and tilefish.
- Limit your tuna intake to one fresh steak or two medium tins of tuna per week (280g total).
- Avoid pâté, raw fish sushi and raw, undercooked or reheated meat, poultry or fish, and smoked uncooked fish.
- Avoid liver and liver products.
- Always check 'sell by' and 'best before' dates on all food and drink.

Food Hygiene

- It is important to handle food properly and practice good hand washing daily to prevent food poisoning and infection.
- Wash hands after handling animals, after using the toilet and before preparing food or eating.
- Use separate cutting boards for raw meat versus cooked.
- Use separate cutting boards for meat versus fruit and vegetables.
- Keep fridge at less than 5 degrees Celsius and freezer less than minus 18 degrees Celsius.
- Clean cutting boards with food-safe disinfectant.
- Wash all fruit, vegetables and salads carefully
- Store raw meat at the bottom of the fridge to prevent juices dripping on to other foods.
- Reheat left over food until it is steaming hot
- When eating at restaurants or takeaways, make sure food looks, smells and tastes fresh.
- For more tips on food hygiene check out www.safefood.eu

Alcohol should be avoided during pregnancy. It is not recommended and may harm your baby.

Smoking

Smoking harms your baby's development. Speak to your midwife about ways to stop.

Vitamin supplements

Speak to your doctor, midwife or dietitian before taking any supplements.