

FOCUS

A COMMUNITY FOR EXPATS BY EXPATS

PREGNANCY

General Information

Expecting a baby is a very exciting and life changing period.

It is advisable to choose your options as soon as you find out you are pregnant. Expectant mothers need to decide whether to go through the NHS (National Health Service) system or private healthcare system as soon as possible as hospitals and obstetricians book up quickly.

National Health System

The NHS provides free care throughout your pregnancy and delivery. Expectant mothers should see their NHS GP for their first appointment after which they will be referred to the local NHS hospital and midwife team. Some NHS GPs may share work with the hospital therefore some appointments may be at your local GP surgery. A midwife will attend the birth unless there are complications, in which case an obstetrician will assist. Some NHS hospitals offer a dedicated midwife service for an additional fee. The same midwife will see you throughout your pregnancy and during the birth. With the NHS, you will receive free care throughout your pregnancy and delivery. In addition, pregnant women receive free dental care and medication with NHS prescriptions from conception through to the first twelve months of the baby's life.

Private System

In the private system, you choose your own Obstetrician/Gynaecologist who will care for you throughout your pregnancy and deliver the baby. Most Obstetrician/Gynaecologist consultants in London have both private and NHS practices. Check-ups are generally with the same obstetrician, and he/she and a midwife will be present at the birth. To find a private consultant you can either ask your GP for a recommendation or you can visit Focus website or call the office for names of obstetricians recommended by other Focus members.

Alternatively you may look for a private hospital first and work with their in-house team of midwives and doctors. Choose your doctor wisely as you will have a long-term relationship with him/her.

Insurance Coverage

If you decide to go private it is important to know in advance whether your insurance company is going to cover the private pregnancy and baby delivery costs. Most international insurances and expatriate health packages as well as some British insurance companies include or at least offer a respective coverage at additional fees. You may also check this point with your employer for a possible corporate insurance if you are on an expatriate contract. Eventually you can still go for the self-payment option where you pay for your treatment by yourself.

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Resources:

NHS

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/pregnancy-and-baby-care.aspx#close

Whatever you want to know about getting pregnant, being pregnant or caring for your new baby, you should find it here.

NCT

<https://www.nct.org.uk/pregnancy>

They provide support for parents through antenatal and postnatal courses, website, local branches and community infrastructure, helpline... and much more.

Baby Centre

<http://www.babycentre.co.uk/pregnancy>

BabyCentre provides support for parents at every stage of their child's development, from preconception to age five.

A selection of maternity hospitals in Central London, private or NHS:

The Portland Hospital, Marylebone

www.theportlandhospital.co.uk

Private Hospital providing specialised care for new mothers and babies from conception through to postnatal support.

St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington

www.imperialprivathealthcare.co.uk

NHS hospital with a private maternity ward (The Lindo Wing) providing care for both baby (including Royals) and mother.

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, Chelsea

www.chelwest.nhs.uk/private-care

NHS hospital with a private maternity ward (The Kensington Wing) providing care for both baby and mother.

Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital, Hammersmith

www.imperialprivatehealthcare.co.uk

NHS hospital with a private maternity ward providing care for both baby and mother.