



SCI-BONO  
DISCOVERY CENTRE  
SCIENCE CAREER CENTRE

## Teenage Pregnancy

A guide for teens

Having a baby is a major life event! This is true whether you have planned your pregnancy or not. This is particularly true if you are a teenager who may be unsure about what to do, and what to expect.

A part of you could be struggling with the normal issues of being a teenager, yet another part is facing the responsibilities of an adult.

This leaflet provides information in answer to some questions you may have about pregnancy, labour, becoming a mother, and raising a child.

It is important to remember that the information provided in this leaflet is not the only resource you have. There are a number of organisations you can seek help from whose contacts are provided in this leaflet.

## I'm Pregnant – What Should I Do Next?

If your pregnancy test is positive, it's understandable to feel mixed emotions: excitement about having a child, worry about telling your parents, and anxiety about pregnancy and childbirth.

You may also be feeling worried or frightened if you're not sure that you want to be pregnant.

Make sure to talk through your options and think carefully before you make any decisions. Try talking to a family member, friend or someone you trust.

Whatever your age, you can also ask for confidential advice from:

- Visit your local community based clinic.
- A contraception or sexual health clinic
- **Lifeline:** 011 728 1331
- **Love Life Sexual Health Line:** 0800 121 900
- **Nicro:** 011 873 6976
- **Marie Stopes Information related to pregnancy, emergency contraception:** 0800 11 7785

## What Will Motherhood Be Like?

New mothers often doubt that they are able to take care of a baby. As a teenager, it can be even more difficult to be fully aware yet of what it means to be a mother.

Motherhood starts during pregnancy. While in the womb, your baby grows, moves, listens and responds to the world around him or her. Your baby's development in the womb helps him or her to develop after birth.

Raising a child is demanding, and as a teenager, this may be difficult to accept. However, by taking care of yourself and your baby during and after your pregnancy, you will help your baby grow in a healthy way.

## How We Can Help

A counsellor or psychologist is trained to listen to people and guide them through problems, emotional difficulties and decision-making. This could help you.

**Contact the Science Career Centre at Sci-Bono Discovery Centre for more information or to book an appointment:**

**Telephone:** 011 639- 8400 (switchboard) or 8479 / 8450 / 8434

**Visit:** Science Career Centre, Sci-Bono Discovery Centre

**Physical Address:** Corner of Miriam Makeba and Helen Joseph Streets, Newtown, Johannesburg

**Website Address:** [www.sci-bono.co.za](http://www.sci-bono.co.za)

**E-mail:** [admin.careers@sci-bono.co.za](mailto:admin.careers@sci-bono.co.za)



# How Will My Body Change?

As a teenager, your body is still changing and growing. As a pregnant teenager, the change that your body goes through could be uncomfortable. Some symptoms that you may experience include:

- Morning sickness (nausea or vomiting) is an early sign of pregnancy. This symptom usually does not last throughout your pregnancy, and you may not only experience morning sickness in the morning.
- Your breasts may grow larger and may become sensitive.
- You may urinate more frequently.
- You may experience joint and back pain.
- You may have more saliva than usual.
- Your feet and hands could swell.
- You may experience constipation, stomach ache or heartburn.



**It is important to book for antenatal care at a clinic or hospital as soon as you can. This is vital for your own health, and the health of your baby.**

# What About My Mental Health State?

Teenage pregnant women and mothers can become depressed or anxious. This is when your thoughts, feelings and behaviours change and affect how you are able to cope with school, work, relationships or at home. Many younger mothers may feel really down or worry a lot of the time. These feelings can also affect the body. If these symptoms last for more than a couple of weeks, speaking with a counsellor can help a lot. Sometimes, antidepressant medications, prescribed by a doctor, are useful too.



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# Why Is It So Difficult To Cope?

Experiencing more than one problem at the same time may result in a buildup of stress. Some teenagers may use harmful substances to try to avoid the pain. Some may feel that ending their life is the only way to end the stress. This is not a sign of weakness or 'craziness'. It means that they are experiencing more pain and stress than they can cope with. If you feel this bad, it is difficult to imagine another way of living. Yet, another person may be able to offer a different view of your situation and choices that you have not thought about, so it is important to get help.

# What About School?

You will need to decide if or when you want to go back to school after your baby is born. With the right amount of support from friends and family, some teenage mothers manage to combine both school and taking care of their child. If the decision about schooling is difficult to make, or causes conflict in your family, speak about it to a counsellor, teacher or someone you trust.

# What About The Baby's Father?

**Your pregnancy could have affected your relationship with the baby's father. This may be more difficult if the pregnancy was unplanned. It may even have caused your relationship to end. You may feel:**

- **Angry and think that life is unfair:** the father's life goes on as usual, while you have to deal with the pregnancy.
- **Sad and abandoned:** you may think that no one will want to be with you again. For these reasons, it may be difficult to decide about the father's involvement with his baby. Think about what is best for your baby. Even if a child's parents do not live together, he or she could still have a loving relationship with each parent.

# I Am Scared Of Labour

As early as possible, try to think about someone who could be your birth companion. A birth companion is a person who you trust and who is willing to support you during labour. Discuss the birth companion policy with the nurses at the clinic.

**"Just having my mom with me in labour made all the difference. It was still scary, but at least I wasn't alone."**

