



# Unplanned pregnancy: deciding what to do

For some, what decision to make about an unplanned pregnancy is clear, for others it can be difficult and confusing.

When deciding what to do about an unplanned pregnancy, it is important to remember that you are the best person to make this decision. You, more than anyone else know what is important to you and what is best for you at this point in your life.

## What is influencing your decision?

There are many different things that influence any decision we make in life. Use the picture below to help you think about what may influence your decision.

**Activity:** Write down some of the things which may influence your decision about your unplanned pregnancy.



## Some tips to help you decide

- Think about how you are feeling and write these down; this can help if you're feeling confused. The Children by Choice website includes a number of questions to help explore your feelings.
- Get advice from people you trust. This could be a friend, someone from your community, your local doctor (GP) or other health professionals like a counsellor.
- Get information about your options. Your GP or the websites listed below are a place to start.
- If you need more information, write a list of questions and ask your GP or a counsellor for advice.
- Think about your life now and how each of your options could change it.
- Talk through your feelings with people that can listen to you without judging you.
- Talk to someone who has had an unplanned pregnancy. Knowing more about their experience may help you.
- Make sure to look after yourself, both physically and emotionally.
- Whatever you decide to do, think about who can give you support and the kind of support you need.
- Trust yourself to make a decision that is right for you.

## Some other things to consider

- A pregnancy options counsellor can give you unbiased advice and support, and help you consider all of your options. Some of these services are free and all will respect your privacy. Call 1800 MyOptions or visit their website for more information.
- Regardless of your decision about your unplanned pregnancy, you will soon need to make some practical arrangements.

## What are your options?

Not every unplanned pregnancy is an unwanted pregnancy. When making a decision it is important to consider all of your options.

### Abortion

This is when your pregnancy is stopped. It is sometimes called a termination.

- Abortion is legal in Victoria.
- You have a right to privacy; all abortion services will respect your confidentiality.
- There are two types of abortion.

#### Medical abortion

- If you are in the early stages of pregnancy (up to 9 weeks), there are medicines you can take to end your pregnancy.

#### Surgical abortion

- Most surgical abortions are done in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.
- It is a safe and simple day surgery procedure.
- Usually, you will have a general anaesthetic so will be asleep during the surgery. Sometimes it can be done using a local anaesthetic.
- If you are more than 14 weeks pregnant having a surgical abortion is more complex. Also, there are not many services that can help you.

Call 1800 My Options for more information about abortion, including where to get one and the costs involved.

## Adoption

You may consider having your child raised by another family. Adoption is permanent, so before deciding on adoption, we suggest you also consider other choices for the care of your child.

### Alternative care

If you choose to continue with your pregnancy but feel unable to look after your child yourself at this point in your life, there are different types of alternative care arrangements that you may be able to consider, such as:

- Kinship care – your child is raised by extended family
- Foster care – another person or family care for your child.

### Parenting

You may choose to continue on with your pregnancy and raise your child.

### Pregnancy care

If you decide to continue with your pregnancy, speak with your local doctor (GP) about your pregnancy care options. Your GP can also talk with you about any concerns you have about your pregnancy and arrange any medical tests you need.

There may also be emotional and financial supports available to you. A Social Worker or Pregnancy Options Counsellor may be able to give you more information about these.

## Remember

There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to decide, no 'right' or 'wrong' combination of things you can do to help you get there. Whatever you decide, and however you arrive at that decision, it is 'right' as long as it works for you.

## For more information

### 1800 My Options

1800 696 784

(Monday to Friday 10am-4pm)

[1800myoptions.org.au](http://1800myoptions.org.au)



If you need an interpreter  
remember you can ask for one

### Sexual Health Victoria

[shvic.org.au](http://shvic.org.au)

### Children my Choice

[childrenbychoice.org.au/  
information-support](http://childrenbychoice.org.au/information-support)

## For information about a range of health issues

### Better Health Channel

[betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

### The Women's website

[thewomens.org.au/  
health-information](http://thewomens.org.au/health-information)

## Related fact sheets on the Women's website

- Unplanned pregnancy options counselling
- Unplanned pregnancy in violent and abusive relationships

Use this space to write down your thoughts, feelings, and any questions you may have.

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**Disclaimer** This fact sheet provides general information only. For specific advice about your healthcare needs, you should seek advice from your health professional. The Royal Women's Hospital does not accept any responsibility for loss or damage arising from your reliance on this fact sheet instead of seeing a health professional. If you require urgent medical attention, please contact your nearest emergency department.  
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