



Recommended maternity care – it's your decision

This information sheet answers questions you may have about the maternity care that is recommended by Dhelkaya Health, or care you are considering declining.

It is for general information only and should be discussed with your midwife.

WHAT IS RECOMMENDED CARE?

Your midwife checks you and your baby's well-being and will recommend tests and procedures as part of that care. Some are recommended for all pregnant women, and others may be recommended to you because of your health, your baby's health or your family history.

WHAT IF I AM NOT SURE ABOUT THE CARE RECOMMENDED FOR ME?

Ask questions at any time.

The **BRAND** prompt can remind you to ask about:

Benefits: What are the benefits of the recommended test or procedure?

Risks: What are the risks of the recommended test or procedure?

Alternatives: What other options are there to the recommended test or procedure?

Now or nothing: Does this decision need to be made now? What if I decide not to have the test or procedure?

Decision: The final decision is always yours.

CAN DHELKAYA HEALTH REFUSE TO CARE FOR ME IF I DECLINE CARE?

You always have the right to decline recommended maternity care and still have access to healthcare. If you ask for a procedure, your care provider may not agree because:

- they believe it will do more harm than good
- they believe there is no benefit
- it is not clinically indicated.
- resourcing restrictions mean it is not available.

If Dhelkaya Health is unable to provide the care you need or desire, your midwife will explain your options and support you to get the care you need. This may involve your care or your baby's care being provided at another health service.

WHAT IF DHELKAYA HEALTH THINKS I AM PUTTING MYSELF AND/OR MY BABY AT RISK OF HARM IF I DO NOT ACCEPT CARE?

Dhelkaya Health has a responsibility to explain the risks of not accepting care and the potential outcomes of these decisions. They cannot, however, make you consent to recommended care.

You are responsible for making decisions about your maternity care, and for the potential consequences of those decisions. Regardless of your informed decisions and/or possible outcomes, Dhelkaya Health will continue to treat you with honesty and compassion.

A Child Protection Notification cannot be made because you do not accept recommended care.



WHAT IF I DECIDE I DO NOT WANT THE CARE RECOMMENDED FOR ME?

You and your midwife and General Practitioner Obstetrician (GPO) can make a plan that will best fit your wishes. The decision about whether or not to consent to recommended care is always yours. You can take a support person to your appointments and/or write down topics you would like to discuss, such as:

- recommended care you are considering declining and your reasons for this
- information affecting your decision
- any questions or concerns you may have
- your interest in seeking a second opinion
- your understanding of the advice you've been given
- when you would like to review your plans.

You can request a *Discussion and Partnership Care Plan: Declining Recommended Maternity Care MR/045 form* from your care provider. This form will help to assist you and your care provider in making a plan that will best fit with your wishes.

You will be asked to sign your care plan to acknowledge that you understand and agree with the individual care plan that has been discussed.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN FOR THE REST OF MY MATERNITY CARE?

You can continue to access maternity care as agreed in your plan. The plan for your maternity care should be sent to other doctors and midwives at your hospital and you will get a copy. This means everyone involved in your care should know what you want for your maternity care.

Your midwife and GPO will go over your plan with you whenever anything changes that might affect your or your baby's wellbeing.

If your plan is about your care in labour, you will be asked to confirm the plan when you go into labour. If you wish to change your mind, you can do so at any time.

IN THE CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

There may be a time, that you may be very unwell or may be under a general anaesthetic and unable to give informed consent. In these rare cases, your support person or legal guardian will need to make decisions on your behalf. There may be some cases (in extreme emergencies) where consent is not required.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER MY BABY IS BORN?

You and your baby will continue to receive care as normal and will not be treated differently because of your plan. You may wish to talk to someone about your care and birth experience. Your experiences, whether positive and/or negative, are important to us.

Support is available to you, at any time, including in the future. You can talk to your care provider, consumer/patient liaison, or seek counselling.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM UNHAPPY ABOUT MY MATERNITY CARE?

Talk to your care provider or another care provider at any time. You can also provide feedback via a feedback form

If you are unhappy with the response from your health service, contact the Office of the Health Complaints Commissioner: www.hcc.vic.gov.au

Dhelkaya Health should provide you with a copy of the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights.