

Birth Companions' Antenatal Course for Expectant Mothers Course Outline

Week 1: Pregnancy Experiences, Expectations & Exercise

During this session we will share experiences of being pregnant and discuss common complaints and health issues associated with pregnancy. We will also consider self-help strategies to make pregnancy more comfortable and manageable including how to exercise gently and safely and relax and rest. We will cover pelvic floor exercises, breathing techniques and gentle movements to try during every stage of pregnancy.

Week 2: Physiology of Labour & Birth

This session is designed to help you understand what happens to your body during labour and birth. What are contractions? What does the cervix do? What happens to the placenta? We will talk about the physical changes your body goes through during labour and birth and how hormones work together to help along the way.

Week 3: Positions, Breathing & Pain Relief for Labour & Birth

Many women worry about pain during child birth and how to cope with contractions, so the aim of this session is to explore and discuss the many different active birth positions, breathing techniques, birthing aids and pain relief options that can help to relax and prepare your body and mind for a smooth and stress free birth.

Week 4: Feeding Your Baby

Whether you plan to breastfeed, bottle-feed or do a bit of both, we will discuss how to prepare to feed and bond with your baby during your early hours and days together. We will talk about the differences between breastmilk and formula and learn how to express and store milk when breastfeeding isn't possible. We will also focus on skin to skin and its many benefits for both babies and new mums.

Week 5: Choices When Writing a Birth Plan

Giving birth is all about choices and this session focuses on the many choices and options available to you during labour, birth and after a baby is born. We will talk about how the hospital and health professionals can offer support, what to pack for a hospital stay and how to write a detailed birth plan to outline your personal preferences and requests long before labour starts.

Week 6: Postnatal Care

This session focuses on what happens after your baby is born. We will discuss some of the main changes your bodies will go through after giving birth as well as what new born babies will be doing in the first few hours and days of life.