

## **Outpost Aberdeen**

### **Maternity Care**

As soon as you find out you are pregnant, see your GP. During the course of your pregnancy you will be seen by the community midwife attached to your GP's surgery and, in case of complications, by an obstetrician at the Aberdeen Maternity Hospital.

In the UK, Maternity Care is offered by the NHS and is totally free of charge, as well as all the prescribed medicines during pregnancy and for mother and baby for a year after birth. You may also be eligible for a "Health in Pregnancy Grant" from the UK Government when you reach 25 weeks of pregnancy. At the time of writing this is a one-off, tax free payment of £190. More information on eligibility and how to claim can be found on the Government website <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm> (search for Health in Pregnancy Grant on their site).

Usually, there is a team of midwives in each surgery, so you may be seen by different ones during the course of your pregnancy. Your doctor will explain how and when you will see those people. During the pregnancy you will be sent to the Aberdeen Maternity Hospital to have two scans. This normally happens in the 12<sup>th</sup> week and a detailed scan at 20<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy. Only if your GP or Obstetrician thinks it is necessary, additional scans will be carried out. The hospital has a very strict policy of not telling the sex of the baby during the scans. This is due to a lawsuit they had for getting it wrong, and because of the delays caused during the scans if the sex was not easy to recognize.

At the time of writing, in Aberdeen there is only one private clinic doing scans where you can find out the sex of your baby. They do the so-called 3D Scans and have different packages. They prefer to carry out these scans between the 26<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> week of pregnancy. They are open late in the evenings and also during the weekends, so future parents do not need to take time of work. For more information visit: [www.babyscanning.co.uk](http://www.babyscanning.co.uk)

When you see your midwife for the first time you will be "booked". That means that you will register in the NHS system as pregnant. You will be given a booklet (usually known as your "notes") that will record all about your pregnancy, from test results and scans to each of your visit to your midwife. The booklet is yours so you can also write any detail you may want to record in it. You'll be advised to keep your notes with you at all times when are approaching your due date. This is in case you need to rush to hospital and don't have time to pick up anything from home.

Although not very common in Britain, it is possible to have a home birth. The delivery will be done by a community midwife at your home. Please note that there is no guarantee that this will be your own midwife. You can also choose to have your baby at the hospital, delivered by the midwife on duty. The midwives have a 12-hour shift, so depending on how long you are in labour, you may be assisted by more than one midwife. Normally, you will stay at the hospital for a few days after the birth. It is possible to return home

a few hours after delivery if mother and baby are well (according to the “6 hour discharge” policy). This may not be possible, though, depending on the time you give birth because the baby has to be checked and certified healthy by a paediatrician before leaving the hospital and they normally visit the Maternity wards during the morning.

The birth will take place in either the Midwife Unit or Labour Ward depending on your needs (the Labour Ward is under the guidance of an obstetrician). At the Midwife Unit there is a birthing pool that can be used for pain relief as well as for a water birth. Unless you have a caesarean section, you will be placed on a ward with a few other mothers and their new-borns. There are a few private rooms with en-suite facilities available, known as “Amenity Rooms”. These rooms are allocated on a first come first served basis at your own expense, and you need to register your interest in advance. To do this, fill in the form at the Maternity Hospital Reception sometime before the birth. At the time of writing, the cost of the room is £100 and generally, your private health insurance will cover this expense.

The delivery rooms, either at the Labour Ward or the Midwife Unit are spacious and they are decorated in a way to look as less clinical as possible. You will find in each room a comfy chair for your birth partner, a gym ball and a Radio/CD Player. Be aware that there are no meals provided for partners. It is advisable to pack up some food in case you have a long labour.

At the Maternity Hospital there is also the Westburn Ward for intensive care or for observation before or after delivery. For example, if your waters broke but you are not in labour yet, you may be seen and checked up at the Westburn Ward and then sent home until your contractions start.

If you live in some areas of Aberdeenshire (including Westhill), you can choose to give birth at the Aboyne Maternity Unit. A midwife led facility (it also has a birthing pool) giving excellent care with a very homely atmosphere. You do need to be aware that in the event of complications you would have to be transferred by ambulance to Aberdeen Maternity Hospital, which takes 35-40 minutes, possibly more in the winter months.

Even though it is not common practice, and at first they will refuse it, if it is the mother’s desire, a programmed C-Section can be arranged.

Before the birth, you can participate in antenatal classes in which you learn all you need to know about delivering and caring for your baby. Often people who have been in the same antenatal class will have reunions for years after the birth. It is possible to do yoga in pregnancy classes and aqua-aerobics.

You can also take a tour at Aberdeen Maternity Hospital. This is recommended, as it enables you to become familiar with the surroundings prior to the birth. Partners are encouraged to attend but, if you already have children, you will need to organise a babysitter, as children are not permitted.

[www.yogaofbirth.co.uk](http://www.yogaofbirth.co.uk) Yoga classes with Judy Cameron, midwife from Aberdeen Maternity Hospital. Classes are in Aberdeen, Inverurie and Kintore. She also runs a Couples Workshop. A practical workshop about giving birth, for women and their birthing partners.

Sarah Gray runs yoga for pregnancy classes at Westdyke Leisure Centre, in Westhill. She can be contacted at: sandngray@tiscali.co.uk or her mobile 0775 4054146.

There are Pregnancy Yoga classes at The Robert Gordon University. RGU Sport, Garthdee Campus, Garthdee Road, Aberdeen AB10 7GE, tel.: 01224-263666. More details at: [www.rgu.ac.uk/rgusport](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/rgusport) and click on Activities and Events.

Aqua-aerobics classes are at the Beach Leisure Centre, Beach Promenade AB24 5NR, Aberdeen, Telephone: 01224 655401. They are run by a midwife from the Aberdeen Maternity Hospital.

You can have a pregnancy and postnatal massage in Aberdeen city or in Banchory with Ruth. She has been recommended by Shell partners. Telephone: 07884313339, email: ruthclair@hotmail.com

You can ask your community midwife for more information. There are always workshops about breastfeeding, and Mother & Baby groups as well as Breastfeeding groups (you can join these while pregnant) organised by the local GP surgeries.

In general it is possible to have a whole range of anaesthetics while delivering your baby, from Entonox, also known as "gas and air", to an epidural. Discuss what the difference is and what you wish with your doctor and community midwife. Your midwife will recommend to use a TENS machine for the first stage of labour.

TENS stands for Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation. A TENS machine consists of a small box, about the size of an audiocassette case and gives out little pulses of electrical energy. Leading out of the box are four wires connected to sticky pads. You place the pads on your back.

The pulses prevent the pain signals from your womb and cervix from reaching your brain and also stimulate your body to release its own, natural "feel good" substances, called endorphins. TENS works best if you start using it at the very beginning of your labour because it takes about an hour for your body to respond to the electrical impulses by releasing endorphins. Hire a TENS machine and use it at home before you go into hospital.

You can hire or buy it at Mothercare and you can attend information and training sessions about the TENS machine at the Aberdeen Maternity Hospital.

Several weeks before your due date, your community midwife will ask you to prepare a "Birth Plan" and she will offer to discuss any doubts you and your birth partner may have. A birth plan is a way of communicating with the midwives and doctors who care for you in labour. It tells them about the kind of labour you would like to have, what you want to happen and what you definitely want to avoid. It is important to express some flexibility. The best birth plans acknowledge that things may not go according to plan. You need to write the plan in such a way that your midwife doesn't feel she has her hands tied. She may need to recommend a course of action, which is not

what you had originally hoped for, but which is in the best interests of you and your baby. Make sure you keep your birth plan together with your notes, so it will be seen by the midwife attending the birth as soon as you arrive to the hospital. For more information on how to write and what to include in your birth plan visit: [www.babycentre.co.uk](http://www.babycentre.co.uk) and check the book Birth and Beyond (details at the end of this section).

It is not a common practice (as it is in other countries) to perform episiotomies during labour. It has to be asked specifically and even then, it will be discouraged very strongly, not at the moment of discussion of birth plan, but at the moment of labour itself. It is wise to keep in mind that the midwife with whom the birth plan is discussed and the midwife that carries on the labour are two different persons.

When you return home with your baby, your community midwife will see you everyday, for up to 10 days after the birth. After that, the Health Visitor from your GP's surgery takes over. She will also visit you, and later you can visit the baby-clinic at your GP surgery every week. It is here where your baby is weighed and given vaccinations. The vaccination plan varies from country to country. Especially if you are coming from outside Europe, it is important to check the different vaccinations that are in place in your home country. These vaccinations can be given here on request, i.e. BCG, at the Neonatal Unit of the Maternity Hospital. If you have problems, the Health Visitor will help you as much as possible. She not only will look after your child, but also you and the rest of the family to help you adjust to the arrival of the new baby. It is also possible to organise nanny or mother's help on a temporary basis. It is always a good idea to check your insurance policy to see if you are covered for this. There is also "BUPA Childcare Service" and you can check with the company running the Shell Nursery, whether they can provide a childminder or a nanny.

Your Health Visitor can also give you information on a Home Safety Check provided by Aberdeen City Council. This service gives advice on potential hazards/sources of danger, a child safety pack, and a maximum of two safety gates and a fitting service, where required, for households with children up to 24 months of age. More information can be found by phoning the Home Check Service on 01224-489388 or by going to the website: [http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/HousingAdvice/nc\\_hoa/hoa\\_homecheck\\_tea\\_m.asp](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/HousingAdvice/nc_hoa/hoa_homecheck_tea_m.asp)

You can hire the services of a Doula. "Doula" (pronounced "doola") is a Greek word meaning "woman servant or caregiver". It now refers to an experienced woman who offers emotional and practical support to a woman (or couple) before, during and after childbirth. A doula believes in "mothering the mother" - enabling a woman to have the most satisfying and empowered time that she can during pregnancy, birth and the early days as a new mum. This type of support also helps the whole family to relax and enjoy the experience.

Birth doulas are trained and experienced in childbirth. They have a good knowledge and awareness of female physiology, but the doula is not

supporting the mother in a clinical role - that is the job of the midwife/medical staff.

To find out more, visit: [www.doula.org.uk](http://www.doula.org.uk)

There are two local doulas in Aberdeen. For their details visit:  
[www.aberdeendoula.co.uk](http://www.aberdeendoula.co.uk)

Mother's help: "The Other Mothers". Lindy Macadie and Ann Conroy.  
Tel.: 07810 174344 or 01339 882568. Please note:

You should check in advance with your medical insurance to see if you are covered for this type of assistance.

They are retired midwives offering one-to-one practical and emotional postnatal support to mothers and their families in their own homes. They provide assistance and guiding on breastfeeding or other feeding method. And will care for your baby, including bathing, nappy changing, minding your baby when you are having a daytime sleep, taking your baby for a walk in the pram and babysitting. They also help around the home with light housework like preparing a quick meal, doing laundry, taking older children to school, and receiving and/or screening visitors. And also will offer encouragement and emotional support if you need it.

There is also a Maternity Nurse in Westhill called Moira Munro. She does a similar type of work as The Other Mothers and can be contacted at: 01224 – 741946 or mobile: 07815709517.

Both services, The Other Mothers and Moira Munro have been hired and recommended by Shell partners in the past.

If you have come from The Netherlands there is no equivalent of the 'kramzorg' post natal care here, other than the groups/individuals mentioned above. Please note that if you use any of the private care providers above this is unlikely to be covered by BUPA/GEMS insurance cover. Please make sure that you check with the company and/or BUPA before organising this type of care.

At the time of writing there is no private obstetrician in Aberdeen. Normally in the UK, if you are privately insured, you could choose to be referred to an obstetrician who will see you from the beginning until the end of your pregnancy. It is still possible to see a community midwife as well if you wish to. The birth will take place at the Aberdeen Maternity Hospital even if a private consultant sees you. The delivery is done under the guidance of the same obstetrician who has seen you from the beginning. After delivery, you would be entitled to a private room at the Aberdeen Maternity Hospital (if available).

It is also possible to become a member of the UK charity National Childbirth Trust, a very useful and helpful organisation. Membership is about £36 a year. The aim of the NCT is to provide support to new parents before and after the birth of their child. The NCT organises antenatal classes, which

have a very good reputation. Besides this, they advise about all kinds of things involving babies, they organise coffee mornings for new mothers, they have support groups for mothers, organise post-natal exercise classes, offer breastfeeding counselling, etc. They organise very popular “nearly-new” sales of baby clothes, equipment and toys. They also have a magazine. To request information or sign up for the NCT visit: [www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk), or phone the Aberdeen branch at 0870 421 1910.

### Registering a Birth

All information about where and how to register a birth is given to you at the hospital or by your community midwife if a birth has taken place at home.

The obstetrician or midwife who was present at the birth will sign a form saying they witnessed the birth.

Since the child is born in Scotland, you have the freedom to register the birth at any registration office in Scotland.

If the parents of the child are married to each other, either parent can register the birth.

If the parents are not married to each other and they wish the father's name to appear on the birth entry they should, ideally, attend together. If the father cannot attend, there are various methods to include the father on the entry, either at time of registration or at a later date.

Further advice can be obtained from any of you local Registration Offices. For Aberdeen City visit: [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk) (Phone: 01224 522616)

For Aberdeenshire visit:  
[www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/registrars/offices/index.asp](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/registrars/offices/index.asp) (Phone: 01330 822878).

They list all the relevant documents you should take to the Registrar.

You will be given an abbreviated copy of the baby's birth certificate free of charge, and a Form EC58 to be given to the family doctor (this gives the baby a Birth Registration Number). A full copy of the birth certificate can be purchased if required. The fee is £8.50 within a year of registration rising to £13.50 thereafter. It is advisable to buy several copies that may be useful in the future, i.e. for applying for a passport.

A registration is definite and can never be transferred to another place or country. You can obtain a copy of the birth certificate at any time from the Registrar.

Some countries (i.e. the Netherlands) allow you to register a birth in a centrally kept registration. Check with your consul and/or local authority abroad or your consulate in the UK for the correct procedure.

Depending on which country you come from, if you want to apply for ID documents for your baby (i.e. Passport) in your home country, you will need to get a legalisation of the Birth Certificate called “Apostille”. This is done at the

Foreign & Commonwealth Office in England and you can do it by post. For more information visit: [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk), telephone: 020 7008 1111.

## Maternity and Baby Clothes and accessories

It can be hard to find nice maternity clothes in Aberdeen. There are many shops selling maternity clothes on line though, and many of them have free delivery and also free returns if you are not happy with your purchase. You'll find that many of the High Street shops sell their maternity range only on line, or that their choice on line is wider than at their local branch.



- Mothercare World, Unit 2, Berryden Rd, Aberdeen, AB25 3SA, ☎ 01224 – 635637. Wider range on line at: [www.mothercare.co.uk](http://www.mothercare.co.uk)
- Next. Only on line for their maternity range: ☎ [www.next.co.uk](http://www.next.co.uk)
- Dorothy Perkins, Bon Accord Centre, Aberdeen, AB25 1HZ, ☎ 01224 – 625720. [www.DorothyPerkins.com](http://www.DorothyPerkins.com)
- New Look, Bon Accord Centre, Aberdeen, AB25 1HZ, ☎ 01224 659 730. [www.newlook.co.uk](http://www.newlook.co.uk)
- Marks and Spencer's, 2 St. Nicholas St, Aberdeen, AB10 1BU, ☎ 01224 – 644281. [www.marksandspencer.com](http://www.marksandspencer.com) Maternity lingerie at the store and maternity clothes only on line.
- Debenhams, Trinity Centre, 155 Union Street, Aberdeen, AB11 6BD, ☎ 0844 5 616161, [www.debenhams.com](http://www.debenhams.com) Maternity lingerie at the store and maternity clothes only on line.
- ☎ [www.formes.com](http://www.formes.com) is a good website for online shopping.
- [www.jojomamanbebe.co.uk](http://www.jojomamanbebe.co.uk) has very practical breastfeeding tops and dresses, plus a whole baby range for your baby, including safety at home, nursery items and baby clothes.
- Babies R Us at [www.toysrus.co.uk](http://www.toysrus.co.uk) has a wide maternity and baby range. Also at Berryden Retail Park by Sainsbury's on Berryden Road, Aberdeen, AB25 3SG
- [www.vertbaudet.co.uk](http://www.vertbaudet.co.uk) whole range of maternity clothes, baby wear, nursery, toys, etc.
- [www.isabellaoliver.co.uk](http://www.isabellaoliver.co.uk) Expensive maternity clothes, including very nice smart gowns for parties and special occasions.
- H&M, 57 Union Street, Aberdeen, AB11 6UF
- [www.bloomingmarvellous.co.uk](http://www.bloomingmarvellous.co.uk) whole range of maternity clothes, baby wear, nursery, toys, etc.
- [www.fromheretomaternity.co.uk](http://www.fromheretomaternity.co.uk) Maternity clothes, including underwear.
- [www.boots.com](http://www.boots.com) whole range of maternity clothes, baby wear, nursery, toys, pushchairs and prams, etc.
- [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) maternity rage, plus everything for your baby.

- [www.tesco.com](http://www.tesco.com) good quality and value for money baby clothes at the stores. Also wide range of baby supplies.
- [www.adams.co.uk](http://www.adams.co.uk) on line shop for inexpensive baby clothes
- [www.asda.co.uk](http://www.asda.co.uk) with stores at Bridge of Dee, Portlethen, Aberdeen Beach, Bridge of Don. Inexpensive baby clothes and baby supplies
- Primark, 143 Union Street, Aberdeen, AB11 6BH, Phone: 01224-213828. Inexpensive, good quality baby clothes.
- Argos, Trinity Centre, Union St. Aberdeen, AB11 6BE, and also Berryden Retail Park by Sainsbury's on Berryden Road, Aberdeen, AB25 3SG. [www.argos.co.uk](http://www.argos.co.uk) for nursery items, pushchairs, prams and toys
- [www.themuslimbabyshop.com](http://www.themuslimbabyshop.com) clothes, books and games including Islamic toys and games
- [www.yumsiemumsie.co.uk](http://www.yumsiemumsie.co.uk) specialising in made to measure maternity/post natal underwear. The owner comes to measure you in your own home
- [www.brightsparkslings.co.uk](http://www.brightsparkslings.co.uk) they make excellent baby slings and each style of baby sling has its own Scots word eg coorie, kimmer, peerie, cuddie
- [www.mamanana.com](http://www.mamanana.com) Maternity and nursing clothes from France.
- [www.expressyourselfmums.co.uk](http://www.expressyourselfmums.co.uk) Information and breastfeeding products.
- Does my Tum Look Big in This? [www.doesmytumlookbiginthis.com](http://www.doesmytumlookbiginthis.com) In the Aberdeen branch they have party dresses to hire, which might be an option if you don't want to spend a lot of money on a dress that you will only wear once or twice.

More information:

[www.laleche.org.uk](http://www.laleche.org.uk) International charity, offering friendly mother-to-mother breastfeeding support from pregnancy through to weaning. Helpline: 0845 120 2918. They also have a local volunteer in Kemnay: Tel: 01224 318931, 01467 642414

[www.babycentre.co.uk](http://www.babycentre.co.uk) Excellent website dedicated to helping new, expectant and "actively trying" parents to find the information, support and reassurance. They offer practical advice from expert sources, such as doctors, midwives and fellow parents.

[www.netmums.com](http://www.netmums.com) Local network for Mums (and Dads), offering a wealth of information on both a national and local level. Once you have registered on your local site you can access details for all kinds of local resources, from child-friendly cafes to childminders, places to go and much more. Very useful for local recommendations and check out information in your area.

[www.pampers.co.uk](http://www.pampers.co.uk) Information, forums and free coupons and offers.

[www.hippbabyclub.co.uk](http://www.hippbabyclub.co.uk) Information, forums and free stuff when you join.

Books: "Birth and Beyond: The Definitive Guide to Your Pregnancy, Your Birth, Your Family - From Minus 9 to Plus 9 Months" by Dr. Yehudi Gordon.  
"What to Expect When You're Expecting" by Arlene Eisenberg, Heidi Murkoff and Sandee Hathaway.