

Pregnancy: A Guide to Decision-Making

The emotional reaction to a positive pregnancy test varies. You may feel happy, sad, depressed, scared, angry, or guilty. You may feel a mixture of all of these emotions and feel confused about what to do. When you find out that you are pregnant, you have to make a decision that will greatly affect your life. This handout presents your options and also raises some questions for you to think about to help you make the choice that is best for you.

If you think you may be pregnant, you should have a pregnancy test as soon as possible to confirm or rule out the diagnosis of pregnancy. Your period can be late for a variety of reasons other than pregnancy. Stress, travel, amount of exercise, and/or illness are some frequent causes of a missed or late period. If it has been more than three months since your last period and your pregnancy test is negative you should make an appointment for a gynecological evaluation in the Women's Health Clinic at McKinley Health Center or with the health care provider of your choice. You should discuss the results of your pregnancy test with your health care provider or a pregnancy counselor. This person will listen, answer your questions, and assist you in thinking through the decisions you need to make. Additionally, it may be helpful to talk with someone else - your partner, a friend, family member, educator, or member of the clergy. Sometimes it is helpful to bring a trusted confidante with you to the pregnancy counseling appointment.

You have three basic choices

- Continue the pregnancy and parent the child
- Continue the pregnancy and place the child for adoption
- Terminate the pregnancy by having an abortion

There may be several questions that are going through your mind, including: "What am I going to do?" or "What do I need to know?" Before you make a decision, it is important to clarify your feelings, think about your plans and dreams for the future, and then evaluate your thoughts, values, and beliefs as they relate to each of the three choices. Sometimes it is helpful to write your thoughts and feelings down on paper. Listing your options and your feelings about each option may help you think more clearly. You may wish to share your list of thoughts with someone you trust.

It is important to know how far along you are in your pregnancy. Your health care provider or pregnancy counselor can assist you in determining this. It is best to begin prenatal care or have an abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. It is important to have accurate information as you work through your decision.

Here is some information on the three basic choices that may be helpful to consider.

1. If you are considering parenting - Questions to consider

- Am I capable of the emotional maturity and commitment it takes to be a parent?
- What are my financial resources?
- What are my living arrangements?
- Will the father of the baby be a helpful supportive presence or will I be a single mother?
- Will the people close to me support this decision? If not, how will I cope?
- Will I be able to raise my child and still accomplish the goals I have planned for myself?

The McKinley Health Center packet relating to pregnancy contains detailed information about pregnancy and local providers of obstetrical care.

2. If you are considering adoption - Questions to consider

- Will the people close to me support this decision? If not, how will I cope?
- Is there someone I can depend on and trust with my feelings?
- Will I feel that helping my child have parents who want it and can care for it is a good decision for both of us?
- Do I have the emotional strength to cope with continuing the pregnancy, giving birth, and relinquishing my child to someone else?

Adoption is not an immediate decision, but rather one that evolves for each individual birth mother as her pregnancy progresses. You can decide to handle the adoption privately through an attorney (in some states) or

through an adoption agency. It is important for a woman to be comfortable with the agency or attorney she chooses.

Further information about adoption can be found in the McKinley Health Center handout on adoption. A good web site for information is <http://www.cradle.org/>.

Whether you are considering parenting or adoption, remember that early prenatal care is critical. Early prenatal care increases the likelihood of a healthy baby, decreases the risks of complications during the pregnancy and delivery, and helps prepare you for childbirth.

3. If you are considering abortion - Questions to consider

- Can I accept abortion as the right choice for me at this time?
- Will the people close to me support this decision? If not, how will I cope?
- Do I want to postpone being a mother until I feel more capable of parenting?
- What are my feelings likely to be in one year? Five years?

A web site for accurate information on abortion is sponsored by the National Abortion Federation and is located at <http://www.prochoice.org/>.

Resource List

Whatever you decide, make the choice that is best for you. In the end, the final decision is yours, and should be one that you can live with for the rest of your life. These resources also offer counseling as a service.

University Resources

<p>McKinley Health Center 1109 South Lincoln Avenue Urbana, IL 61801 www.mckinley.illinois.edu</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home pregnancy test kits available in Health Resource Centers • Pregnancy options counseling offered in Women's Health • Psychological counseling available in Mental Health 	<p>Women's Health 333-2700</p> <p>Mental Health 333-2705</p>
<p>Counseling Center (U of I) Student Services Building 600 East John Street, 2nd floor Champaign, IL 61820 www.couns.uiuc.edu/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Counseling Services 	<p>333-2704</p>

Community Resources

<p>Carle Physicians Group 602 West University Avenue Urbana, IL 61801 www.carle.com OB Services: 217-383-3140 Family Practice: 217-383-3170</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contraception; pregnancy tests; prenatal care • Obstetrician/Gynecologists, Nurse-midwives and Family Practice MD's provide prenatal care and perform deliveries • Deliveries at Carle Foundation Hospital
<p>Champaign-Urbana Public Health District 201 W. Kenyon Road Champaign, IL 61820 www.c-uphd.org 217-352-7961</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy tests; prenatal, childbirth and post-natal education programs and home visits • Enrollment in financial assistance programs
<p>Christie Clinic 101 West University Avenue Champaign, IL 61820 www.christieclinic.com 217-366-1255</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contraception; pregnancy tests; prenatal care by Obstetrician/Gynecologists and Nurse-midwives. • Delivery at Provena-Covenant Medical Center or Carle Foundation Hospital
<p>Frances Nelson Health Center 819 Bloomington Road Champaign, IL 61820 217-356-1558</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contraception; pregnancy tests; prenatal care
<p>Planned Parenthood of East Central Illinois 302 East Stoughton Champaign, IL 61820 www.ppil.org 217-359-8022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contraception; pregnancy testing; counseling options • Medical termination services

Community Resources (continued)

Provena Medical Group 1405 W. Park Street, Suite 201 Urbana, IL 61801 217-344-6451	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstetrician-gynecologists
Women's Health Practice 2125 South Neil Street Champaign, IL 61820 www.womenshealthpractice.com 217-356-3736	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contraception; pregnancy tests; prenatal care with delivery at Carle Foundation Hospital and Provena-Covenant Medical Center • Medical and surgical termination services • Obstetrician/Gynecologists, Nurse-midwife, and physician assistant

Adoption Services

AAA Friends in Adoption 1-800-982-3678 www.friendsinadoption.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free confidential services to pregnant women and couples • Private/nonprofit 	309-452-1170
The Baby Fold 108 Willow Street Normal, IL 61761 www.thebabyfold.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counseling, medical care, housing, legal matters discussed • Financial assistance possible 	United Methodist Church
Catholic Social Services 1315 A Curt Champaign, IL 61821 217-352-5179	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement of infants and children • Referral to St. Monica's Maternity Center in Springfield, Illinois 	Peoria Diocese
The Cradle 800-272-3534 www.cradle.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open adoptions • Assistance with expenses and medical expenses 	Independent/ Private adoptions
Department of Children and Family Services 217-278-5500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption and referral information 	State of Illinois agency
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois 103 South Country Fair Drive Champaign, IL 61821 217-398-3011 www.lssi.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption and referral information • Pregnancy counseling and guidance 	Lutheran Church
Jewish Children's Bureau 312-444-2090	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counseling and guidance 	Jewish Synagogue
Illinois Lawyer Finder 217-525-5297 www.illinoislawyerfinder.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides attorney referral lists 	Illinois State Bar Association

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: <http://www.mckinley.illinois.edu>