I’M PREGNANT!
HELP FROM THE FEDERAL FOUNDATION MOTHER AND CHILD

I HAVE SO MANY QUESTIONS. WHO CAN HELP ME?
Everyday life at a pregnancy counselling centre: a counsellor talks about her work.

WHAT IS THE COUNSELLING CENTRE?
Women and couples share their experiences of pregnancy counselling.

WHERE CAN I FIND A COUNSELLING CENTRE?
Your personal guide to one of the more than 1,600 pregnancy counselling centres throughout Germany.

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Dear Readers,

Pregnancy as a time of hope - unfortunately not every woman is able to have this experience. Financial issues frequently make bringing a new life into the world challenging and complex. The Federal Foundation Mother and Child has been providing additional financial assistance via local pregnancy information centres for over 30 years, helping expectant mothers – and fathers - in severe difficulties directly and with no bureaucracy.

Improved framework conditions during pregnancy are part of today’s family policy, as far as I’m concerned, just like the new ElterngeldPlus which came into force on 1 January 2015, as well as the further expansion and increase in child care quality.

My wish is that as many expectant mothers as possible can experience their pregnancies in a relaxed way and full of anticipation!

My wish is that every expectant mother could be able to experience her pregnancy in a relaxed way and full of anticipation!

Manuela Schwesig,
Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

“A CHILD DURING TRAINING?”

- Nora, 19 years old

I’m doing an apprenticeship as a retail clerk and am five months pregnant. When I learned of my pregnancy, I was totally overwhelmed. My boyfriend and I are both still in the midst of training and now, at 19, we’ll already be parents? I had no idea how we would cope. My doctor then recommended a pregnancy counselling centre to me. I’ve had many discussions with my counsellor there, and my boyfriend was involved in some of the meetings too. Now I know that I won’t lose my training place because of my pregnancy and that the training can even be carried out part time. We also receive financial aid and were supported in our search for a new apartment because our previous flat was not suitable for a child. So training and a child are possible, after all.

“AM I CAPABLE OF RAISING A CHILD ON MY OWN?”

- Anna, 26 years old

For my boyfriend it was clear right from the beginning, that he didn’t want any children. When I became pregnant, the relationship fell apart. I was alone and did not know what to do, because I’ve actually always wanted a child. Then I turned to a pregnancy counselling centre. My very open, patient counsellor listened to my concerns and showed me not only that she was there for me, and that our discussions would not leave the room. That was a good feeling! But she also told me frankly that it can be difficult if I have to take care of everything alone, and gave me links to other organisations that support women in similar situations. I’m so glad that I went to the counselling centre when I did so that I could make a request for assistance from the Federal Foundation Mother and Child. The financial support and advice helps me a great deal and makes my start with the baby easier.
When I found out that I was pregnant for the third time, I was a little shocked. I had just begun to work again and was glad that our two children were cared for during the day in kindergarten and at school. A third child makes it very difficult for us financially. In addition, I was worried about possible complications because of my age. My gynaecologist noticed this quickly and put me in touch with a pregnancy counselling centre. I found a valuable contact in my counsellor, who took my fears and worries seriously and showed me specific ways and means to cope. For example, he did a calculation example and explained what financial assistance we could get. We now know who we can turn to when we need help.

**“ANOTHER CHILD – I’M NOT SURE ...”**

- Sabine, 41 years old

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**“CAN WE AFFORD THAT?”**

- Esra, 32 years old and Veli, 33 years old

We have always wanted a child. But when we learned of the pregnancy, we didn’t know if we could deal with it. We both had limited contracts. Added to this, neither of our families lives in Germany and could help out. So the question was: who could? My doctor then recommended a pregnancy counselling centre to me. At the beginning we did not dare to speak openly about everything. However, we rapidly developed a good, trusting relationship with the counsellor, and soon felt we could share all our concerns and queries with her. We now receive financial support and have also found out about the help that exists for children and parents in Germany. This was all new to us – things like the fact that a midwife would support us before and after birth, and that we could choose one ourselves. It’s also a great relief to know that we can continue to contact the counselling centre for advice after our daughter is born.
Anyone can come to us: from 14-year-old schoolgirls to women going through the menopause who have no longer bargained on getting pregnant. Even expectant fathers are welcome. In addition to general questions about the pregnancy, many come because they have financial worries and cannot actually “afford” a child. Our counsellors then explain their legal rights, outline which support options are available and also fill out requests for financial aid from the Federal Foundation Mother and Child together with women seeking advice. If women experience a bad separation or have psychological problems during their pregnancy, our psychological professionals can help. We also arrange contacts with other organisations, such as mother-child facilities.

We want women to feel comfortable during their consultation with us. You can say whatever you have on your mind - in peace and without taboos. If necessary, we can also call on an interpreter to help those who speak little German. Of course, everything remains confidential because all counsellors are bound to secrecy.

As a counsellor, I do not try to guide people seeking advice in a specific direction. The counselling session creates a space for an honest examination of their own situations and supports the women in their decisions.

How can a midwife help me?

Midwives accompany expectant mothers, women giving birth and mothers and families up to the twelfth week of the child. The support covers both advisory and medical services. The costs of these services are covered by the statutory health insurance. It is advisable to contact a midwife already during the pregnancy.

(Expectant) mothers and families in stressful life situations (e.g. illness, partnership conflicts, violence, overburdened) may seek the help of a family midwife - usually until the child is a year old.

Find a suitable midwife or family midwife in your area:

- www.hebammenverband.de/verband/landesverbaende
- www.bfhd.de/hebammensuche
- www.hebammensuche.de

TIP: Ask your gynaecologist or your friends and acquaintances if they can recommend a midwife.

The services provided by statutory health insurers during pregnancy and motherhood include:

- Medical check-ups
- Doctor and midwife care
- Midwife assistance
- Help with medical, dressing and remedies
- Birth in a hospital
- Household care
- Household help
- Maternity benefit

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