



# Are you ready for parenthood?

Tips, advice and support  
for new parents



## #ReadyforParenthood

[southeastclinicalnetworks.nhs.uk/readyforparenthood](https://southeastclinicalnetworks.nhs.uk/readyforparenthood)



## Being a new parent is life-changing



It can be fun and exciting.



It can also be tiring and difficult.

# #ReadyforParenthood

# Hospital care if your baby is ill



Sometimes  
babies are born  
early.



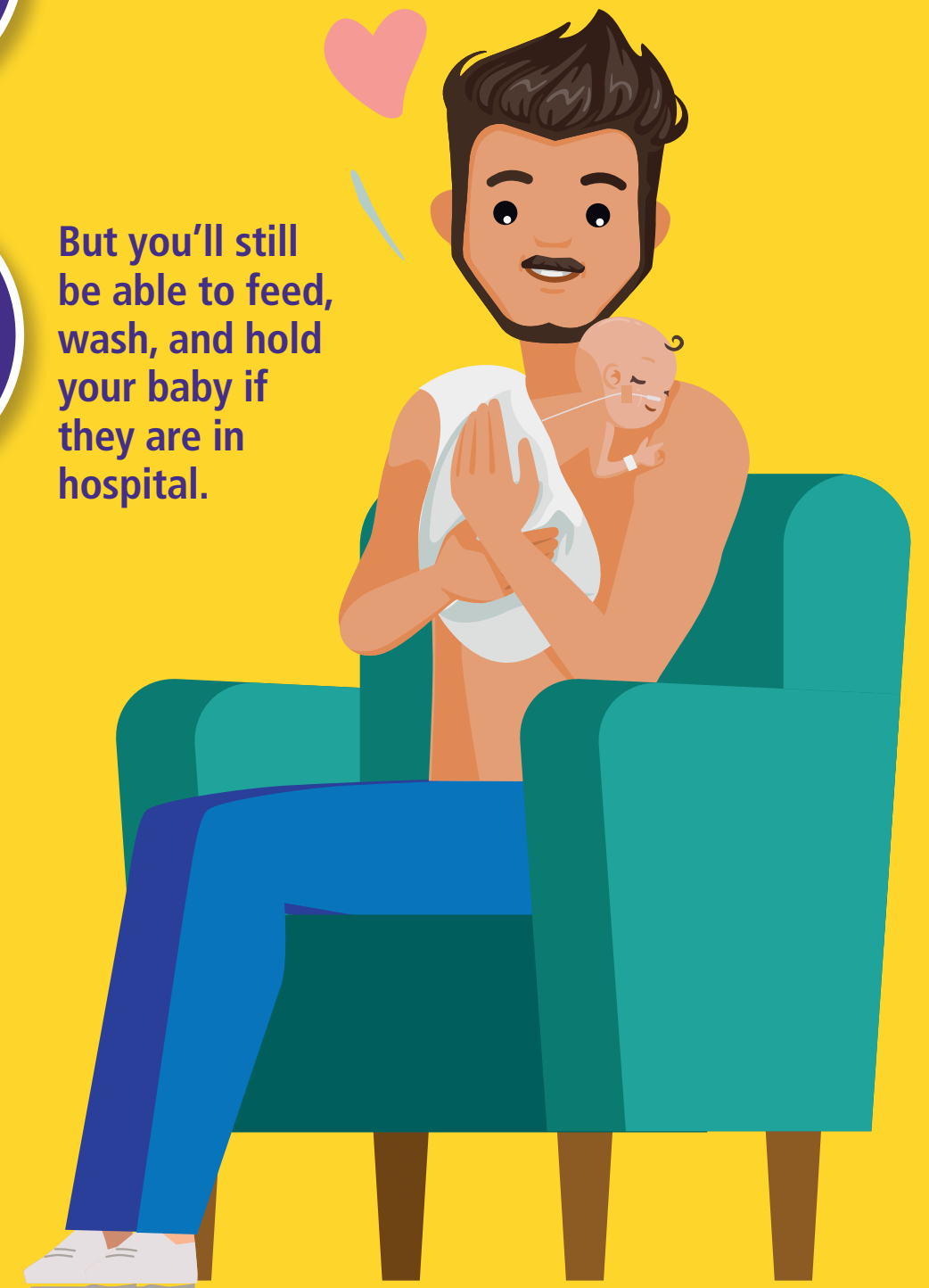
You may feel  
worried.



Or are unwell.



But you'll still  
be able to feed,  
wash, and hold  
your baby if  
they are in  
hospital.



# Bonding with your baby



It can take time to get to know your baby.



Spend time noticing what your baby likes.



Try talking to your baby while you feed them or while changing their nappy.'



Cuddle your baby.



Look into their eyes.



Smile and talk to them.



Your baby loves being with you.



# Feeding your baby



Breastfeeding is good for mums and babies.



If you need help with breastfeeding, ask your midwife or visit a local breastfeeding support group.



If your baby is six months old...



...and able to sit up on their own...



...it may be time to introduce solid food.



Speak to your health visitor for advice.



# Safer sleeping



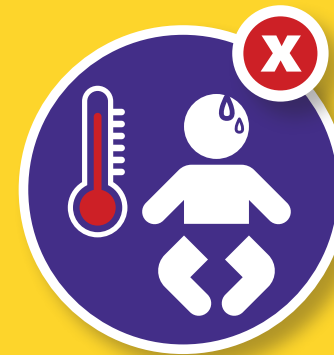
The safest way for your baby to sleep is lying on their back.



Use a firm, flat mattress in a cot, crib or moses basket.



Some parents choose to share a bed with their baby.



Don't let your baby get too hot. This can cause Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDs).



Follow the safer sleep advice from the Lullaby Trust.

[lullabytrust.org.uk](http://lullabytrust.org.uk)



# Crying baby



All babies cry, some just cry more than others.



Your baby may be hungry, tired, or too hot or cold.

They may need a nappy change or a cuddle.



Your baby's cry may make you feel stressed or frustrated.



Ask your Health Visitor or GP for help if your baby's crying is making you stressed, or call 111.





# Looking after your mental health



You may feel low or depressed after having your baby.



If your partner feels low, help them as much as you can.



And ask for help too if you need it.



Speak to your family, friends, or a health professional if you feel low after having your baby.



Make time for yourself.





# Healthy living



Try to eat well.



Take regular exercise.



Physical activity helps you to feel good.



If you take exercise this will encourage your children to be active too.



You don't have to join a gym.



Going for a walk with the pram is just as good.



# Pelvic health



After you have your baby, ask your midwife if you have any questions or concerns about how your body is recovering.



If you've had stitches, keep them clean and dry.



Pelvic floor exercises can help with this.



If you have pelvic, joint or back pain, speak to your GP and ask for physiotherapy treatment.



# Stopping smoking



If you or your family smoke, this can still damage your baby's health after they are born.



Second-hand smoke makes your baby more likely to be admitted to hospital.



It can be hard to stop smoking.



But it's never too late to try.



Speak to a health professional, or contact your local stop smoking service.



# Good relationships



Having a baby often puts a strain on relationships.



Make time for each other when you can.



Do little things to make each other feel cared for.



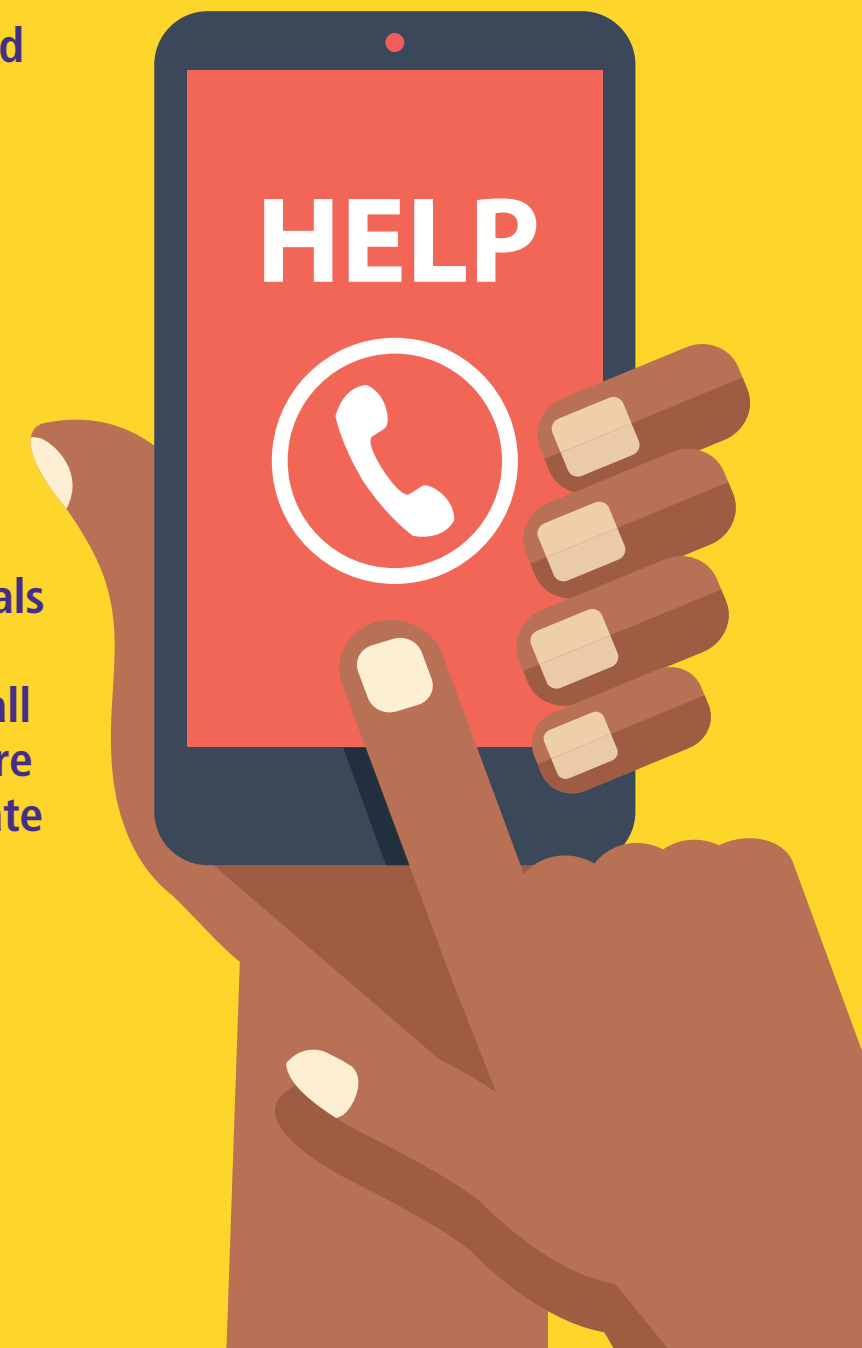
Talk to someone if you need help.



Arguing and abuse may get worse after the birth.



Ask for help from professionals supporting you, and call 999 if you're in immediate danger.



# Contraception and planning a pregnancy



You can get pregnant as little as three weeks after the birth of a baby.



You can get pregnant even if you're breastfeeding and your periods haven't started again.



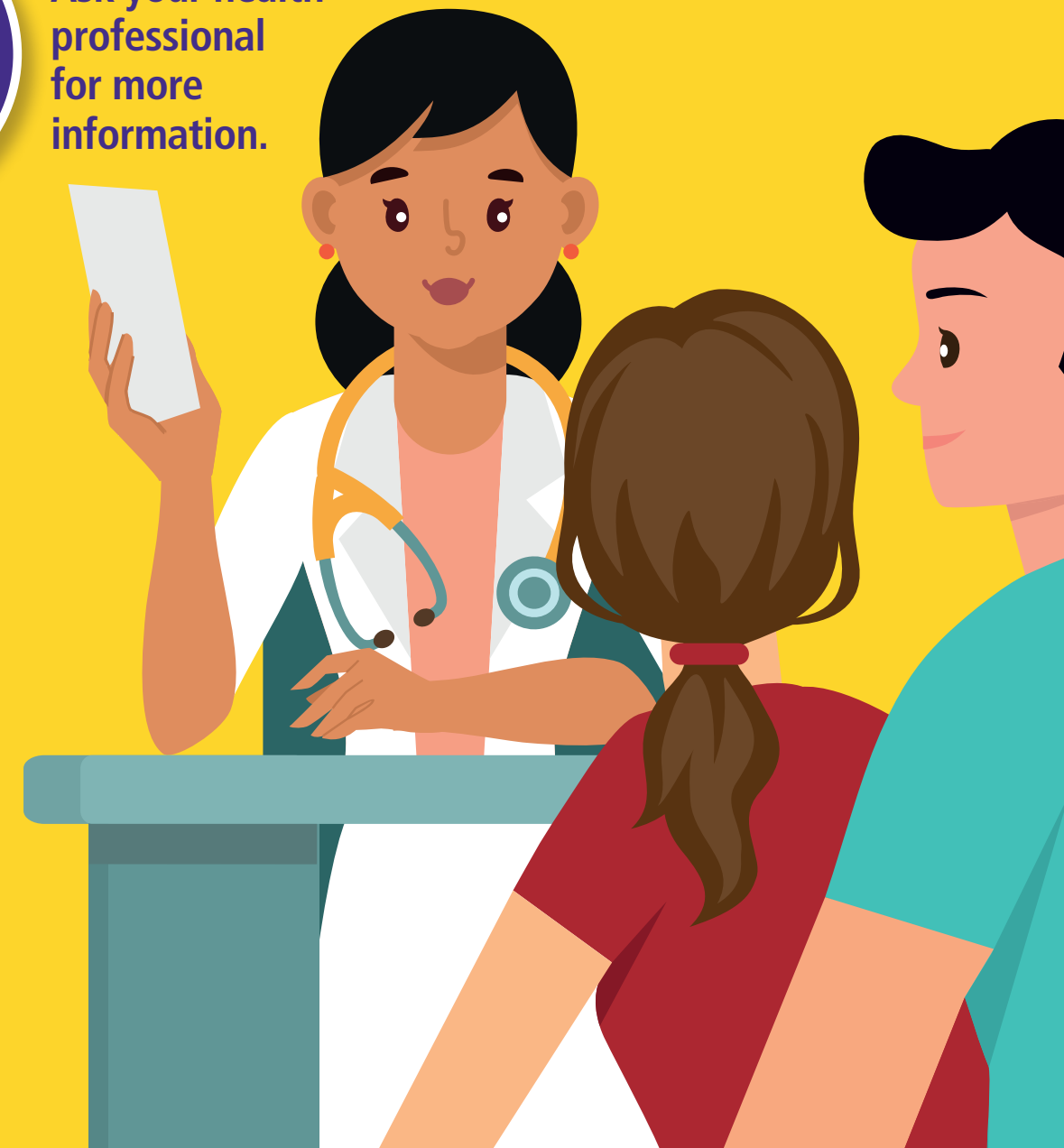
Unless you want to get pregnant again, it's important to use contraception.



Use contraception every time you have sex after your baby is born.



Ask your health professional for more information.



# Vaccinations



Child vaccinations offered by your GP are free.



Vaccinations protect your own baby



Vaccinated people are far less likely to become seriously ill



Vaccinations also prevent the spread of disease to other people.



You should have vaccines against illnesses when they are offered.





# Useful links

Here is a range of useful resources to find out more about any of the topics covered in this booklet:

## Neonatal care

- [bliss.org.uk](https://bliss.org.uk)
- [tommys.org/premature-birth](https://tommys.org/premature-birth)
- [nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk) (search *premature babies*)

## Attachment

- [unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly](https://unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly)
- [bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/bonding](https://bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/bonding)
- [nhs.uk/start4life/baby](https://nhs.uk/start4life/baby) (click on *baby moves*)

## Infant feeding

- [unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly](https://unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly)
- [nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk) (search *breastfeeding*)
- [nhs.uk/start4life/baby](https://nhs.uk/start4life/baby) (click on *feeding your baby*)

## Safer sleeping

- [lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice](https://lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice)
- [unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources](https://unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources)
- [nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk) (search *SIDS*)

## Infant crying

- [iconcope.org](https://iconcope.org)
- [cry-sis.org.uk](https://cry-sis.org.uk)
- [nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk) (search *crying baby*)

## Perinatal mental health

- [tommys.org](https://tommys.org) (search *postnatal depression*)
- [mind.org.uk](https://mind.org.uk) (search *perinatal*)
- [nct.org.uk](https://nct.org.uk) (search *perinatal depression*)

## Healthy living

- [nhs.uk/healthier-families](https://nhs.uk/healthier-families)
- [nhs.uk/live-well](https://nhs.uk/live-well)
- [nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk) (search *keeping fit*)

## Pelvic health

- [nct.org.uk](https://nct.org.uk) (search *pelvic floor*)
- [nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk) (search *post pregnancy*)
- [squeezezyapp.com](https://squeezezyapp.com)

## Stopping smoking

- [nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking](https://nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking)
- [nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk) (search *breast feeding and smoking*)
- [lullabytrust.org.uk/smoking](https://lullabytrust.org.uk/smoking)

## Healthy relationships

- [respectphoneline.org.uk](https://respectphoneline.org.uk)
- [relate.org.uk](https://relate.org.uk)
- [nationalDAhelpline.org.uk](https://nationalDAhelpline.org.uk)

## Contraception and spacing pregnancies

- [nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk) (search *contraception after baby*)
- [nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk) (search *planning baby*)
- [nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk) (search *planning another pregnancy*)

## Vaccinations

- [nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk) (search *pregnancy and covid*)
- [nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations](https://nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations)
- [nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine](https://nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine)

For more information about this campaign and to see more resources, visit:

[southeastclinicalnetworks.nhs.uk/readyforparenthood](https://southeastclinicalnetworks.nhs.uk/readyforparenthood)



# Are you ready for parenthood?

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For more short hints and tips on parenthood, search **#ReadyforParenthood** on the social media channel of your choice.

Brought to you by NHS South East Regional Maternity Team with the support of a wide range of stakeholders, including the following local maternity and neonatal systems (LMNS):

- Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West LMNS
- Frimley Health LMNS
- Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth LMNS
- Kent and Medway LMNS
- Surrey Heartlands LMNS
- Sussex LMNS

## #ReadyforParenthood

# Are you ready for pregnancy?

You may also be interested in our sister campaign:

**Are you ready for pregnancy?**

For more information visit:

[southeastclinicalnetworks.nhs.uk/readyforpregnancy](https://southeastclinicalnetworks.nhs.uk/readyforpregnancy)

