



Definitions

Antenatal	Refers to the period while you are pregnant. During this time, you will be cared for by a midwife, an obstetrician, or your GP to help you and your baby stay healthy, and to detect any possible problems
Antenatal classes	Classes to help parents stay healthy during pregnancy and the birth of their child, and to help prepare them for parenthood
Baby blues	A form of depression that often occurs on the third day after the baby is born, making the mother feel overwhelmed and tearful. It generally only lasts a day. Depression that lasts for two weeks or more is called postnatal depression
Birth weight	The first weight of the newborn immediately after birth. A low birth weight is less than 2500 grams
Braxton-Hicks contractions	Irregular, painless contractions of the womb during late pregnancy as if your body is practicing for birth
Breech position	When a baby is head up, bottom down.
Caesarean	When a baby is delivered through a surgical opening in the mother's abdomen (tummy) while she is under an epidural or general anaesthetic
Continuity of Care	Having the same practitioner throughout the pregnancy, birth and early postnatal period
Child Health Centre	A local centre where you can visit your child health nurse to check on your baby's health, and get help and information on looking after yourself and your baby. It is a good place to meet other mothers. Your doctor or midwife will tell you where your nearest centre is.
Child Health Nurse	A nurse and midwife who is trained in the area of babies and children
Community Midwife	A midwife who works in the community and has special training in pregnancy, delivering babies and looking after newborns and their mothers.
Complications	Any problem that may affect the mother, her pregnancy, birth or the baby
Contractions	The muscles of the womb squeezing during labour
Delivery	The process of giving birth
Domino birth	A service offered to women who want to birth in a hospital but who want continuity of care with the same midwife. They birth in hospital with the midwife in attendance who has cared for them during the pregnancy
Epidural	An anaesthetic or painkiller injected near the spine causing

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	numbness below the waist
Episiotomy	A surgical cut into the area around the vagina during birth
Family Birth Suite	A home-like room within a hospital in which to give birth. King Edward Memorial Hospital is the only WA hospital to offer this
Gestation age	The length of pregnancy in weeks, calculation from the first day of your last menstrual period. It can also be worked out by examining you during pregnancy or from examination of the newborn after birth
GP Obstetrician	A GP who has done special training to help care for women during pregnancy and after birth. Some may be prepared to deliver your baby. The initials DRACOG show they have a Diploma from the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
Gestational diabetes	A problem with high sugar levels in the blood after the 28 weeks of pregnancy. It is usually treated by diet
High-risk pregnancy	A pregnancy in which there is some risk of complication detected or in which a complication occurs. Some examples could be a threatened miscarriage, twins or gestational diabetes. A high risk pregnancy will affect your birth choices
Hypertension	High blood pressure which, if left untreated, can lead to problems during pregnancy
Independent midwife	A midwife who practices in the community, but not with the Community Midwifery Program
Induction	The process of starting labour artificially rather than waiting for it to start naturally. This may include rupturing the membranes (the sac around the baby), inserting a drip with synthetic hormones to induce contractions
Intervention	Medical process in pregnancy or labour. Examples include induction of labour, delivery of a baby by forceps, or by Caesarean
Labour	The process of giving birth
Labour ward/ labour suite	A special room or ward in a hospital for giving birth
Lactation consultant	A person, often a midwife or child health nurse, who is trained in helping mothers to breastfeed
Low risk pregnancy	A pregnancy without any obvious complications
Medicare	Free or subsidised public health care for all Australian citizens and permanent residents
Midwife	A nurse who has undertaken further training and specialised in looking after women and babies during and after pregnancy and childbirth
Multiparous	Woman who has given birth at least once before
Newborn or neonate	This refers to any baby within the first 28 days after birth
Nulliparous	A woman who has never given birth before
Obstetrician	Specialist doctor who looks after women during and after pregnancy and childbirth. The doctor should be a fellow of the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (FRACOG)
Obstetrics	The area of medicine concerned with pregnancy and childbirth, usually related to complications and high risk pregnancies
Paediatrician	A doctor who specialises in babies and children

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Postnatal	Refers to the first 12months after childbirth
Postnatal depression	A health condition that sometimes affects women after the birth of their child. A serious health condition that, if not treated, can seriously harm you and your baby
Pre-eclampsia	A serious health condition that, if not treated, can seriously harm you and your baby
Pregnancy	When a women has a developing embryo or foetus in her uterus. Most pregnancies last for about 40 weeks. This is measured form the first day of your last period before becoming pregnant
Pueperium	The six weeks immediately after childbirth
Shared care	An arrangement between your doctor and a hospital, or your midwife, GP, or midwife/ GP Obstetrician to care for you
Ultrasound scan	This uses sound waves to show a picture of the foetus in your womb. It is used to check the age of the foetus and may show up some problems
Womb or uterus	The part of a woman's body where the foetus grows

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