



Government of **Western Australia**
North Metropolitan Health Service
Women and Newborn Health Service



WANDAS

Pregnancy care information booklet

King Edward Memorial Hospital





Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Aboriginal people of the many traditional lands and language groups of Western Australia and pay respect to their elders past and present. North Metropolitan Health Service recognises, respects and values Aboriginal cultures as we walk a new path together.



Contents

- About WANDAS..... 4
- Transport 6
- Creche..... 7
- Physiotherapy and your pregnancy..... 7
- Substance use and dependency in pregnancy..... 8
- Preparing for a new baby..... 10
- Giving birth and going home 10
- Drug and alcohol use in pregnancy..... 11
- What is infant withdrawal? 13
- What supports are available after I leave the hospital with my baby? 15
- Breastfeeding 15
- Looking after yourself and your baby 16
- Safe sleeping..... 18
- Contraception..... 19
- Useful websites..... 20
- Useful contact numbers 21
- Notes 22



About WANDAS

Women and Newborn Drug and Alcohol Service (WANDAS) is a specialist team based at King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEMH) dedicated to caring for pregnant women experiencing substance misuse and dependence.

WANDAS is Western Australia's only antenatal drug and alcohol service and the largest in Australia. The primary goal is to help you and your baby stay as healthy as possible during your pregnancy with wraparound support. The team focuses on trauma-informed care and culturally responsive practice.

Obstetric medical team

An obstetrician is a doctor with specialist qualifications in delivering babies and providing medical care to women during pregnancy (antenatal care) and after the birth (postnatal care). Obstetricians and senior doctors have the skills to manage complex or high-risk pregnancies and births and can perform interventions and caesareans if required.

Clinical midwife consultant and specialist drug and alcohol nurse/midwife

These team members provide specialised midwifery, antenatal and postnatal care to pregnant women with current substance dependency. You can contact WANDAS (see page 20) to speak to one of the midwives for support and advice. Midwives and the Parent Education midwife are also part of the team.

Social work team

Social workers are allied health professionals who help women and families who may need support. They provide counselling, information, and referrals to other services. Social workers help people to face life's challenges, improve their wellbeing, and do their best to ensure our patients are treated fairly.

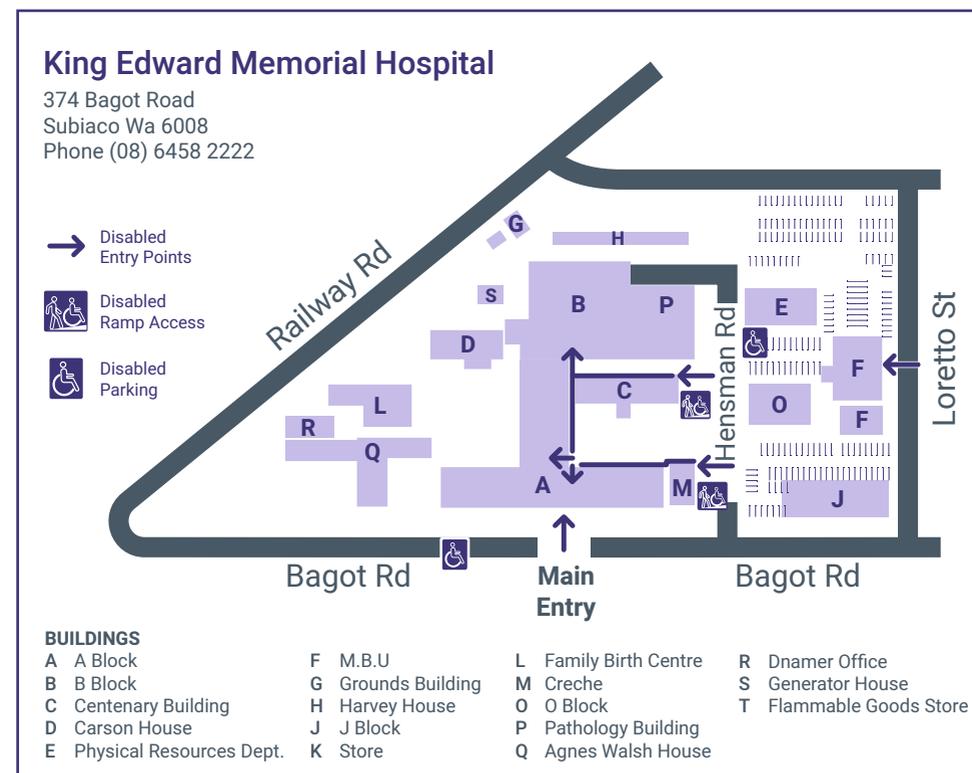
Psychological medicine

The Department of Psychological Medicine includes mental health services provided by psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, and clinical nurse specialist - mental health liaison. Our team provides specialist support to women as they manage their mental health.

Other health professionals include Aboriginal liaison officers, an addiction specialist, women and family services counsellors and allied health professionals.

WANDAS offers different types of clinics depending on the stage of pregnancy, including:

- A booking clinic, where you will be assessed by a midwife (held on a **Wednesday morning**)
- Antenatal clinic (**held every Friday morning in Centenary Clinic**)



- Postnatal clinics for up to three months after your baby's birth held on a fortnightly **Wednesday afternoon in East Wing Clinic**

You will be encouraged to start attending appointments in your first trimester (first 12 weeks) of pregnancy. Coming to WANDAS means you will have access to routine scans and tests, social support, parent education, psychiatric support, midwifery support and referrals to appropriate services, including drug and alcohol treatment services and community support.

Transport

Public

The no. 27 bus stops outside the front entrance of the hospital, and runs from Claremont train station, past KEMH, then along St Georges Terrace to East Perth, approximately every half an hour on weekdays, and hourly on weekends.

Train

KEMH is located within walking distance of both Subiaco and Daglish train stations. In peak hours most trains stop at Subiaco and Daglish.

Parking

KEMH is in the City of Subiaco. Two-hour parking is permitted on a number of streets surrounding the hospital. Please read the signs carefully as you may be required to pay.

ACROD parking

There are two ACROD/disabled parking bays at the front of KEMH on Bagot Road and two in the Hensman Road carpark.

Creche

The creche is free for up to three hours of child-minding for parents or guardians attending KEMH outpatient appointments or visiting their baby in the Special Care Nursery. The creche is staffed by senior qualified childcare workers for children up to the age of six.

Opening hours

Monday-Friday, 8.15am-12.15pm and 1pm-3.45pm

Closed on public holidays

For more information, phone (08) 6458 1370

Physiotherapy and your pregnancy

Pregnancy Walk-in Clinic

Monday to Friday, 11am-12pm, for a short assessment on back pain or joint pain that you may have in pregnancy. No need to book. You may attend this clinic once and further appointments will need to be booked if required.

Phone (08) 6458 2790

Please scan the relevant QR code or search on kemh.health.wa.gov.au

**KEMH
Physiotherapy
classes**



**Breastfeeding
classes:
positioning and
attachment**



**Childbirth
and parenting
classes**



Substance use and dependency in pregnancy

Talking about your drug use is an individual choice but being open will mean you get the best health care for you and your baby. Our team will provide you with education so you are able to make your own informed decision.

Every WANDAS team member provides non-judgmental care. Our goal is for you to feel respected and comfortable. Our team encourages honest and open communication, but we will not pressure you if you do not wish to discuss.

I am pregnant, what can I do?

The safest option for women who are pregnant is not to drink any alcohol. Binge drinking is especially harmful to you and your baby.

If you are using opiate drugs such as heroin, we recommend engaging with community drug and alcohol services to discuss an opiate replacement therapy program.

If you are using stimulant drugs such as amphetamines, or smoking cannabis or tobacco, you should consider stopping or decreasing your use.

WANDAS will help you to work out the safest way for you to reduce your use, stop using or go on a program during pregnancy. We can discuss your options and refer you to the appropriate services.

What if I am on prescribed medications or opioid substitution therapy?

Opioid substitution therapy (OST)

Being on OST is much safer than continuing to use illicit opiates and will keep you stable throughout your pregnancy. Please let your prescribing doctor know you are pregnant. With your permission, we can liaise with them to ensure you are receiving optimal care.

How do I get dosed in hospital?

WANDAS will only provide your medication when you are admitted to hospital. We can liaise with your pharmacy to ensure they are aware you will be in hospital and dosing will recommence as per usual once discharged.

Managing your drug use

Sometimes friends and family may not understand addiction and can make you feel bad or guilty about your drug use. They may be using around you when you are trying to cut back or not use. If you are feeling pressured or finding it hard to make changes, you can talk to a drug and alcohol worker, addiction specialist, doctor, midwife or social worker about implementing strategies and setting realistic goals for yourself.

Keeping appointments for regular health checks

Sometimes it can be difficult to remember appointment dates and times but it's important that you come to the clinic regularly. If unable to attend, please call the WANDAS mobile, and we will organise another appointment. WANDAS will send you text messages to remind you about your appointments.

Medication and nausea

If you have nausea or vomiting, you may need medication to help. If you are on OST and you vomit your dose, you should contact your prescribing doctor. They will work out whether you need to be re-dosed.



Preparing for a new baby

How can I prepare for my baby's arrival?

Babies don't always arrive as planned; you may need to get to hospital in a hurry.

- It is very important to arrange ambulance cover if you do not have it.
- Organise transport to the hospital in advance. Some people put aside money for taxi fares, others arrange with friends or family to drive them to the hospital.
- If you think you are in labour or are worried about your pregnancy, call the Maternal Fetal Assessment Unit at KEMH on (08) 6458 2222. If you think you are in serious trouble, call 000 and ask for an ambulance.
- You may need to make urgent phone calls, so make sure that you have access to a phone or there is enough credit on your mobile.
- The WANDAS midwife can give you a list of essential items to bring to hospital.

Giving birth and going home

What happens to my baby after it is born?

You will stay on the labour ward until ready for transfer to the postnatal ward. If you have a caesarean section, you will go to recovery until ready for the postnatal ward. You will stay in the same room until the day of discharge. Baby will room with you, and baby is unable to leave the ward until cleared for discharge.

If you need to leave the ward for a cigarette or any other reason, please do this when you have a visitor, as the ward midwives are unable to care for your baby if you are off the ward. Leading up until your delivery the team will discuss your postnatal stay.

Drug and alcohol use in pregnancy

Please scan the applicable QR code for specific drug use information in pregnancy and breastfeeding. If unable to access, please let your midwife know and they will happily print the document for you. Alternatively, search for the information on thewomens.org.au.



Cigarettes and tobacco during pregnancy and breastfeeding



Amphetamines in pregnancy and breastfeeding



Alcohol in pregnancy and breastfeeding



Cannabis in pregnancy and breastfeeding



**Buprenorphine & naloxone
(Suboxone™) during pregnancy
and breastfeeding**



**Vaping and e-cigarettes
during pregnancy and
breastfeeding**



**Heroin during pregnancy
and breastfeeding**



**Methadone during pregnancy
and breastfeeding**



**Benzodiazepines in pregnancy
and breastfeeding**



What is infant withdrawal?

When your baby is born, they are no longer receiving a supply of the drugs or medications from your blood or placenta. This can result in your baby experiencing withdrawal called neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS).

It is not possible to predict which babies will withdraw, as the amount/dose is only one factor that influences whether NAS occurs and when it starts.

If you are on opiate medications, we recommend staying in hospital until day five. As babies can experience withdrawal symptoms typically on day three, it is best to be in hospital if this happens so baby can be closely monitored.

The midwife will discuss this with you in the pregnancy and provide you with all the information about what to expect after baby is born.

Other factors include:

- The drugs or medications used
- How it is taken and how often
- Genetics and environment
- The mother's general health and nutrition

Symptoms include:

- Unsettled behaviour and disturbed sleep patterns
- Frequent sneezing
- Tremors and fever
- Poor feeding
- Stiffness or tight muscles
- Vomiting and loose bowel actions



Infant withdrawal can begin a few hours after birth but most babies who have withdrawal will show signs a few days to a week later.

Some babies experience a late withdrawal up to two weeks after the birth. All babies need to be monitored for withdrawal. The midwife will check your baby for symptoms and record them on a score chart. The midwives in clinic will go through this with you to help you prepare.

If your baby experiences withdrawal it can be upsetting, but there are things you can do to help. The midwives will support you in caring for your baby.

Babies usually need:

- Extra comforting and cuddles
- Frequent feeds
- A quiet environment
- Swaddling

Some babies will have a more complicated withdrawal and require medication and care in the Special Care Nursery in hospital.

Having a baby in hospital for a long time and being away from your partner or other children is not easy. Our staff understand this can be a stressful and emotional time. Take comfort in the knowledge that we all have the same goal to help you and your baby through the withdrawal and go home as soon as possible. Please let staff know if you need more support.

Babies with infant withdrawal may be more unsettled when you go home and may need more care and comforting. The symptoms of NAS may continue for longer than a week.

Talk to your midwife and child health nurse about how you can make your baby more comfortable.

What supports are available after I leave the hospital with my baby?

WANDAS will see you and your baby in the postnatal clinic for up to three months after your baby's birth.

When you leave the hospital with your baby you will also be assigned a child health nurse who is there to make sure you and your baby are well and that you have the support and assistance you need. Some women have said they are tired and overwhelmed after giving birth and that it is hard to remember what they were told at the hospital about caring for their baby. Don't be afraid to ask the nurse if you have any questions. The nurse will visit your home, or you may have to visit a Child Health Clinic.

Before going home from hospital, you will be given a purple Child Health Book. This book contains the location of your local Child Health Clinic. The child health nurse will provide support and advice until your baby reaches school age. If you are concerned or worried about your baby's health, tell your partner, WANDAS, GP, child health nurse or attend Perth Children's Hospital.

Breastfeeding

If I am using, should I breastfeed my baby?

Breast milk is the best nutrition for your baby and is linked with all sorts of benefits for a baby's body and brain. It develops the baby's immunity, helping them fight off common illnesses and get stronger. Breastfeeding can also help you and your baby to bond. For some women, breastfeeding can be a challenge. Your child health nurse or a lactation consultant can help.

Drugs can be transferred to the baby via breast milk, but the benefits of breastfeeding can outweigh the impact of the drug. For example, if you have been on a methadone program throughout your pregnancy and your baby is experiencing withdrawal, breastfeeding can ease your baby's withdrawal symptoms.



Safety planning

If you feel that you may use drugs or alcohol while breastfeeding, please discuss with the WANDAS midwife as they can advise you on the safest options in this situation.

If I am drinking alcohol, can I breastfeed my baby?

Babies are particularly sensitive to alcohol so if you are going to drink, try to breastfeed before having a drink. Try not to have more than one standard drink per day and wait at least three hours per drink before you breastfeed your baby.

As your baby might get hungry during this time, you may want to consider expressing some breast milk and storing it before you have a drink.

It is advised that you don't drink to the point where you become drunk and if you do drink more than one or two drinks regularly, you may need to consider feeding your baby with formula.

Looking after yourself and your baby

When it all gets too much, how do I manage?

Parenthood can be a great experience, but it can also be difficult to cope with such a big change. Parenting support lines are a great way to get most of your questions answered without having to make an appointment. There is a list of contacts at the back of this booklet that might be helpful.

Getting out in the community and going to parenting support groups where you can meet people who have similar lives to you can also help you reduce stress and learn strategies for coping.

Spending time with your baby is incredibly important for their development, hold your baby, talk to them, sing and play and make silly faces. Remember to take time for yourself, too, because you will be exhausted at times.

It's common for newborn babies to wake up often during the day and night, so try to get as much rest as you can when the baby is sleeping. When a baby cries all the time, or you have not had much sleep, you may feel sick, angry or out of control. Some parents deal with this situation by taking time out.

If you need some time for yourself, make sure that your baby is somewhere safe, such as in their cot, close the door and take 10 minutes to do something that relaxes you in another room. Have a cuppa or call a friend, if it is something that relaxes you.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Arrange for a family member or friend to help you when you are feeling tired or overwhelmed, or just need some support.

Young babies can get sick easily, so keep a list of emergency numbers handy and make sure that you have access to a phone.

What do I do if I use?

If you are using drugs and have a baby, it is important to be organised so that the baby is well cared for. Some partners alternate their use so that there is always someone not affected by drugs and/or alcohol who is looking after the baby. You could also arrange for the baby to be cared for by a trusted family member or friend if you feel like you must or want to use.



Safe sleeping

Alcohol and/or drug use during pregnancy or after your baby is born increases the risk of sudden unexpected death in infancy.

Do not sleep with your baby in the same bed or couch. There is a risk the baby may fall out of the bed or be suffocated.



Scan the QR code for more information



Contraception

Your options for contraception will be discussed with you before you leave hospital. It's safe to have sex following the birth of your baby once bleeding has stopped.

You may feel reluctant to have sex even after several months, especially if you have had problems with your pelvic floor or stitches. Discuss any problems that continue after six weeks with your family doctor or child health nurse.

After you have given birth, pregnancy can still occur, even when you are breastfeeding. We encourage you to think about contraception before you give birth and discuss with your midwife or doctor the methods of contraception that are suitable for you after birth.

Scan the QR code for contraception options or
search [kemh.health.wa.gov.au](https://www.kemh.health.wa.gov.au)



Useful websites

- Alcohol and Drug Foundation <https://adf.org.au/>
- Beyond Blue www.beyondblue.org.au
- Car and Road Safety <https://kidsafe.com.au/car-road-safety/>
- Feed Safe www.feedsafe.net
- Head Space <https://headspace.org.au/>
- Lifeline Australia 13 11 14
- Ngala www.ngala.com.au
- PANDA <https://panda.org.au/get-support/support-new-parents>
- Quit <https://www.quit.org.au/>
- Raising Children Network www.raisingchildren.net.au
- Red Nose Australia www.rednose.org.au
- Women's Domestic Violence Helpline <https://www.wa.gov.au/service/community-services/community-support/womens-domestic-violence-helpline>
- Wungening Aboriginal Corporation <https://www.wungening.com.au/alcohol-and-other-drugs-support>

Useful contact numbers

WANDAS Monday – Friday, 8am-4pm	(08) 6458 1582 or mobile 0414 892 753
KEMH Maternal Fetal Assessment Unit	(08) 6458 2222
KEMH Social Work Department	(08) 6458 2777
Breastfeeding Centre of WA	(08) 6458 1844
KEMH Drug Information Line	(08) 6458 2727
Women's health and family services Pregnancy, early parenting and illicit substance use - they provide support, information, counselling, and outreach services for women	Northbridge (08) 6330 5400 Joondalup (08) 9300 1566
ADIS - Alcohol and Drug Information Service Anonymous 24-hour phone service	(08) 9442 5000 or 1800 198 024
Next Step Inpatient Withdrawal Unit	(08) 9219 1919
Australian Breastfeeding Association	1800 686 268
Ngala - Early Parenting and Early Childhood Services	(08) 9368 9368
Parent line	1300 808 178
Healthdirect (24 hours)	1800 022 222
The Pregnancy, Birth and Baby helpline	1800 882 436





Content for this booklet used with kind permission from
Anex, Suite 1, Level 2 600 Nicholson St, Fitzroy North VIC 3068
Phone: 03 9486 6399 Fax: 03 9486 7844
Email: info@anex.org.au
www.anex.org.au



Women and Newborn Health Service

King Edward Memorial Hospital
374 Bagot Road, Subiaco WA 6008
☎ (08) 6458 2222
🌐 kemh.health.wa.gov.au

Compiled by: Women and Newborn Drug and Alcohol Service
Produced by: Women and Newborn Health Service

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.



We are proud to be a smoke-free site.
Thank you for not smoking or vaping in any buildings or on our grounds.
Ask a staff member about free nicotine therapy to help your cravings
during your hospital stay.