Preconception counselling clinic

Your local healthcare professional has referred you to the preconception counselling clinic for more information about pregnancy because you have a heart condition.

What is the preconception counselling clinic?

At the preconception counselling clinic, you will meet with a healthcare professional with experience of heart disease and pregnancy. This may be face-to-face or online.

In many cases this appointment will be straightforward, particularly if your heart condition is mild. The healthcare professional will assess your chance of complications during pregnancy related to your heart condition and any other health conditions you may have.

To make this assessment your healthcare professional will review your most recent heart tests.

This may include an ECG, echocardiogram, MRI or exercise test. If you have not had these tests recently, they may need to be repeated. You will be asked about any family history of heart disease. If you have other health conditions these will also be discussed.

You and your partner may be given advice on other matters, such as stopping smoking or losing weight, which can help reduce the risks to you and your baby.

At the clinic the healthcare professional will discuss any complications they may be concerned about. They will describe how you would be looked after in pregnancy and where your care would be based. They will also tell you if any changes would need to be made to your medications before pregnancy or if you would need any more tests or treatments to make your pregnancy safer.

For a small number of people, the risk of pregnancy may be high. If you are in this category the doctors will speak to you in more detail.

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Should I stop using contraception?

If you already use contraception, it is important that you do **not** stop before your appointment. If you are not using contraception, we would advise you to start an effective form of contraception while you wait for this appointment and any other tests you may need.

Can I bring my partner?

We encourage you to bring your partner or another appropriate family member. The information you will be given at the clinic aims to help you make decisions about a pregnancy. Your partner should also understand any risks involved in pregnancy so that they can be a part of the decision about whether to go ahead with a pregnancy.

Sometimes the conversation about risk in pregnancy can be upsetting and it is important that you have support.

Can I ask questions?

We encourage you to ask questions. Before your appointment, speak with your partner, family member or friend and write down any questions you have. Bring these questions to the clinic with you.

You can find more details, including information on effective contraception, at: www.socn.scot.nhs.uk

Crystal Mark 24191
Clarity approved by Plain English Campaign

SOCN
SCOTTISH OBSTETRIC CARDIOLOGY NETWORK

This document has been prepared by Public Services Delivery Scotland (PSD Scotland) on behalf of the Scottish Obstetric Cardiology Network (SOCN). Accountable to Scottish Government, PSD Scotland works at the heart of the health service providing national strategic services to the rest of NHS Scotland and other public sector organisations to help them deliver their services more efficiently and effectively. SOCN is a collaboration of stakeholders involved in obstetric cardiology care, who are supported by a PSD Scotland Programme Team to drive improvement across the care pathway.

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