

The Scottish Adult Cystic Fibrosis Service- Edinburgh

Cystic Fibrosis & Pregnancy- Information for women with Cystic Fibrosis

Information for Patients

This leaflet covers the important information which you should consider before considering starting a pregnancy.

Successful pregnancy is possible in well women with Cystic Fibrosis (CF), but it is a major undertaking which presents significant health challenges. While our specific advice will depend on your current health, these challenges include:

Early Pregnancy

Treating chest infections is more difficult because some of the best usual antibiotics cannot be used as they would be harmful to an unborn child.

Throughout Pregnancy

The expected weight gain can be very difficult to achieve, as your growing baby needs energy in addition to your usual high energy requirements.

Pregnancy-related (gestational) diabetes is common in women with CF, even if you have never had diabetes before. High blood glucose levels are harmful to your developing baby and also to your health, increasing the risk of difficult chest infections. Insulin treatment may be needed to manage your glucose levels.

If you already have impaired glucose tolerance or CF related diabetes, tighter control of your self-checked glucose levels and HBA1c (hospital average glucose check) will be advised.

Late Pregnancy

As your baby grows and your abdomen swells, it becomes harder to clear your chest and you may need to adapt your airway clearance technique. Chest infections may become more common and harder to clear.

Delivery

For women with CF it is important for delivery to be arranged at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, where the best expert specialist care is on offer.

After Delivery

Pain in the days following delivery can make coughing and airway clearance particularly hard, especially if you need to have a Caesarean section.

Looking after a newborn infant

This can make it very difficult for you to keep your own health under control.

For all these reasons, we encourage you to discuss any future plans for pregnancy with the CF Team well in advance of trying for a baby. That will allow the team to advise you on individual health risks and how best to proceed. Unplanned pregnancies are best avoided when you have CF. We would advise all women with CF to be using contraception. We can discuss this with you in clinic if you would like advice.

In addition, our normal practice is to offer any women with CF who are considering a pregnancy the opportunity to discuss the risks and treatments on offer with the expert CF Antenatal Team as soon as a pregnancy is being considered, and certainly before starting a pregnancy. This appointment also allows us to review your medication to ensure that it is safe to be taken during pregnancy.

Joint Clinic

For best outcomes, if you become pregnant, you will need to attend the CF antenatal clinic at the Western General Hospital. This is joint clinic which is made up of members of the CF Team as well as obstetricians and diabetes specialists who have a particular interest in CF. The maximum gap between clinic appointment is 4 weeks and so you will be asked to attend hospital very frequently. Each clinic visit can take up to two hours and depending on your health, we may even need to see you as frequently as once or twice weekly. We may ask you to start monitoring your blood sugar levels regularly and if you already have diabetes you will need to monitor your blood sugar levels at least four times daily.

The CF Team and CF Antenatal Team will always do their best to work with you, if you wish to start a family. However, to do this we welcome early discussion of the topic.

Successful pregnancy is possible if you are well enough, but because of the challenges outlined above it will require you to attend a lot of extra clinics appointments in Edinburgh and also to pay special attention to your self care throughout pregnancy.



For further information please contact us at:

The Scottish Adult Cystic Fibrosis Service

Ward 54, 1st Floor,

Anne Ferguson Building

Western General Hospital

Crewe Road South

Edinburgh

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Or visit our website at:

<http://www.nhsllothian.scot.nhs.uk/Services/A-Z/CysticFibrosisAdultService/Pages/default.aspx>

Contact Telephone Numbers

CF Office Tel: (0131) 537 1762

CF Secretary: (0131) 537 1781

Public Transport and Travel Information

Bus details available from:

Lothian Buses on 0131 555 6363 www.lothianbuses.co.uk

Traveline Scotland on 08712002233 or www.travelinescotland.com

Train details available from:

National Rail Enquiries on 03457 484 950 or www.nationalrail.co.uk