



Pregnancy and Birth



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Some children «just happen», others are carefully planned. Some couples desperately long for a baby but can't get pregnant, others are afraid to take on the responsibility for a child. There are unwanted teenage pregnancies, and there is unwanted childlessness. These factors influence how parents feel about pregnancy and children. Today, many couples try to plan a pregnancy carefully. But it isn't always easy. It can take a while to get pregnant, even for a young and healthy couple.

Pregnancy is a precious time in a couple's life. There is a whole new life to prepare for, and a new family member to welcome. Nowadays, most young people have never experienced the arrival of a child. A hundred years ago, young women learnt about pregnancy and childbirth from their mothers, aunts and older sisters. Today, we need special public health nurses, evening classes and midwives to give advice. While it is important to recognise



the challenges, young people shouldn't feel too anxious about becoming parents.

When the baby is born, what young parents need most is good advice and support from family and professional carers. But no matter what everybody tells you: learn to trust your own instincts, too!

I want to get pregnant

A woman can get pregnant approximately between the ages of 15 and 45. However, her chances vary within this reproductive phase. Biologically speaking, a woman has her «most fertile» years between 25 and 30.

Getting pregnant might take a while; even for a healthy and young couple. It is recommended to seek medical advice, if there is no pregnancy within a year.

There is no denying the fact that it is harder to get pregnant after the age of 40. Chromosomal deficiencies are more frequent in mature eggs, increasing the risk of miscarriage or birth defects. If you want to get pregnant at a more mature age, talk to your gynaecologist.

Difficulties in conceiving are not that uncommon. About one in six couples remain childless due to a fertility disorder in one of the partners. Check your fertility with your doctor or in a special clinic. It can help to have the support of a psychologist or a counsellor in this difficult situation. Obviously, a healthy and stress-free lifestyle will also have a positive effect on your fertility.

We also recommend the sections “foster family” and “adoptive family” in the chapter “diversity of families” for further reading.

Social Freezing

Human oocyte cryopreservation (egg freezing) is a process in which a woman's unfertilized eggs (oocytes) are extracted,

frozen and stored. The term “social freezing” is used when this is performed without any medical indication. With the help of modern cryopreservation methods it is nowadays possible to thaw the eggs for fertilization at any given time

This gives women, who cannot or do not want to fulfill their wish of a child at the present time, the chance to have a child at a later date. Oocyte cryopreservation was at first aimed only at young women who had cancer and had to have chemotherapy, whereas it is now also used in other situations.

The law in Switzerland regarding “social freezing” is ambiguous. It is generally interpreted as allowing egg freezing without medical indication, e.g. for career reasons. The storage of the frozen eggs is only allowed for a period of five years however.

While egg freezing may be a good or even necessary option in certain cases, the egg retrieval process for oocyte cryopreservation is not without its dangers. It should be noted furthermore, that there are also higher health dangers associated with a mature-age pregnancy. While there have not been many studies on the risks of pregnancies in women who are over 55 years of age, health care professionals do believe the health risks to be serious.

Finally pregnant

Are you pregnant? Congratulations! You are in for a wonderful adventure. Your body and soul are about to change, and life with your partner will never be the same again. A pregnancy raises many questions. Your gynaecologist or midwife has the answers to all the medical issues concerning you. If you are already thinking about where to give birth, attend the information events organised by hospitals, where you can even visit the delivery rooms. The internet offers a ton of websites dedicated to parents-to be. You



can find a selection of websites at the end of this chapter.

Unwanted pregnancy?

Are you unsure about continuing or terminating the pregnancy? Such a decision is never taken lightly. In Switzerland, abortion is legal up to week 12 after your last period. If you are uncertain, there are several medical helplines and other psychological counselling services to help you come to a decision. Young women under 16 must see a counsellor or talk to someone at the «Kinder- und Jugendpsychiatrischer Dienst» (Child and Youth Psychiatry Service).

Cantonal counselling centers

Apart from many medical questions, you may also have questions concerning your relationship, sexuality, money, employment law or maternity benefits.

Contact your cantonal counselling centre for confidential and free advice on these issues. You'll find the addresses at the end of this chapter.

Prenatal care

Most babies are born healthy. Still, it is wise to have the baby's weight and position as well as the mother's blood pressure checked regularly during the pregnancy. Ultrasound scans are also part of the regular check-ups. Apart from these routine checks, there are a number of other tests that are part of the prenatal diagnostics. Some of these tests may be useful, but please be aware that there are very few ways to influence the child's development before it is born. Parents should consider very carefully which tests could be helpful for them, and what could be done for the unborn child if a defect is diagnosed. Prenatal diagnostics can cause a couple to consider terminating a pregnancy which they had fully supported up to this point.

Which costs are covered by your health insurance?

The mandatory basic health insurance will fully cover the routine checks during pregnancy and the cost of giving birth. There is no co-pay («Selbstbehalt») for these services. Your insurance will also pay a contribution to an antenatal class. It is up to you to choose the place where you want to give birth: at a hospital, a birthing home or at home. After giving birth, your insurance will cover postnatal care and contribute to breastfeeding counselling. If you stay at the hospital after the birth, the baby's stay is also covered by your insurance. You will find all the mandatory services in the Federal Health-Care Benefits Ordinance. The Federal Office of Public Health or your personal health insurance will provide further information.

Antenatal classes

The birth of a child is a unique and unforgettable experience for every mother and father. Many couples want to be well prepared and start thinking about it quite early. In antenatal classes, pregnant women get ready for the big moment physically and psychologically. These classes are also a good way to meet other prospective parents.

Where to give birth?

In Switzerland, about 98% of all babies are born in hospitals, which provide the necessary medical equipment in case of an emergency. The remaining 2% are born at midwives' homes, birthing homes or at home. Talk to your gynaecologist or your midwife and find out which place suits you best. You should start to think about where to give birth around the middle of the second trimester. Many hospitals organise free information events, where you can visit the delivery room and meet the staff. You don't need to sign up for these information events, just check the dates with each hospital directly.



Should you prefer a hospital or clinic outside your canton of residence, make sure you check with your health insurance to see whether or not the cost is covered.

It is best to register your child for the mandatory basic and supplementary health insurance before the baby is born.

Home Births

Home births are quite rare in Switzerland. According to the Swiss midwives association only about 1 percent of all births in Switzerland occur at home. Various studies have shown that a planned home birth can be as safe as a hospital birth as long you are healthy and have had no complications during your pregnancy. In the case of a homebirth, you give birth to your child at home, with a midwife attending.

Postnatal care: premature birth

Parents of prematurely born babies can join the parents' group of the Kinderklinik Bruderholz (UKBB), even if their baby was not born there. There are group meetings once a month, where various issues are discussed. There is always a paediatric nurse present at the meetings. The parent's association "Känguruh" for premature children and their parents is also open to anyone who is interested.

Parents of twins and multiple births

Twins are often said to be «as like as two peas in a pod ». However, identical twins are only about half as frequent as non-identical or dizygotic twins. Identical twins share the genetic material, whereas non-identical twins are no more similar than siblings of different ages. They can both be girls, or boys, or a boy and a girl. Life with twins or multiple births not only means double happiness, it also means a lot more work and requires even better planning. Don't hesitate to ask your family and friends for support.

A special magazine called «Multipack» offers useful and scientific articles for parents of twins and multiple births. In many cantons, there are clubs for parents of twins or multiple births.

Baby Blues and postnatal depression

During pregnancy, the hormones in a woman's body, such as progesterone and oestrogen, run wild. After giving birth, and after the placenta has been removed, the hormones drop back to normal within a few days. These rapid hormonal changes are the main culprits causing "baby blues" after delivery. During the first few days after giving birth, crying fits are quite frequent – but nothing to worry about.

50-70% of all mothers get the «baby blues» during the first three to five days after giving birth. They are touchy and often sad. However, there are also cases of severe postnatal depression and psychosis, which are caused by a number of factors. Postnatal depression affects about 10% of all mothers, usually during the first few weeks or months after giving birth. Psychotherapy usually helps. Postnatal psychosis is very rare, only found in one or two out of every 1000 births.

If you suddenly feel like crying, don't hold back. Sometimes it helps to talk to other mothers in the same situation. Find a self-help group or talk to your doctor or your midwife.

HELPLINE «FAMILYSTART»

The midwife-network "Family Start beider Basel" offers a 12-hour hotline and professional house-visits 365 days a year to families with newborns, to ensure that you continue to receive help and care when you are back home after the birth. Every day of the year, from 8 am to 8 pm, experienced midwives are available to answer your questions about the health and care of mother and child. In some cases, the midwives may visit you in your



home. They can also refer you to parent counselling services as well as medical providers.

This service is free of charge for women who delivered their babies at the Universitätsspital or the Bethesda Spital in Basel. If you had your baby at another hospital, there is a one-time fee of 50 Chf. This service can also be used by women who reside in cantons other than Basel-Landschaft or Basel-Stadt.

FamilyStart HELPLINE: 0848 622 622

(Daily from 8am to 8pm)

Breast feeding counselling

Midwives and nurses show young mothers how to breastfeed their babies right after giving birth. Your health insurance will also cover three sessions with the midwife or specialised nursing staff. You can find extra support and advice with «La Leche League».



Pregnancy and birth: addresses and links

Please note: Most of the described services and links are in German. If a service is explicitly offered in English as well this is marked by a *

Switzerland	Aargau	Basel-Landschaft	Basel-Stadt	Solothurn
I want to get pregnant				
www.swissmom.ch >Kinderwunsch www.kinderwunsch.ch www.familienplanung.de > Kinderwunsch www.bzga.de > Themen > Sexualaufklärung und Familienplanung	Kinderwunschzentrum Baden http://kinderwunschbaden.ch	Kinderwunschzentrum Region Basel* http://www.kinderwunsch-basel.ch/	Kinderwunschzentrum Region Basel* http://www.kinderwunsch-basel.ch/	Frauenklinik Bürgerspital Solothurn Abklärungen bei unerfülltem Kinderwunsch
Understanding a miscarriage				
www.babycenter.ch/pregnancy/trauerundverlust/fehlgeburtverstehen/ http://www.familienleben.ch/leben/konflikte/fehlgeburt-verarbeiten-1584			Elternbabyzentrum Basel offers counselling after a miscarriage Rütlistrasse 51, 4051 Basel Tel. 076 562 03 35 Begleitung nach einer Fehlgeburt	
Social Freezing				
www.kinderwunschzentrum.ch				
Finally pregnant				
www.swissmom.ch www.wireltern.ch http://www.familienleben.ch/ http://www.liliput.ch/ https://www.ch.ch/de/geburt http://www.babyguide.ch				



Switzerland	Aargau	Basel-Landschaft	Basel-Stadt	Solothurn
Unwanted pregnancy?				
<p>Schwanger - wir helfen Hilfs- und Beratungsstelle</p> <p>Scheuermattweg 4 3007 Bern Postfach 1076, 3000 Bern 23 Tel. Büro: 031 961 64 74 http://schwanger-wir-helfen.ch/</p>	<p>Counselling regarding pregnancy conflict:</p> <p>Beratungsstelle für Familienplanung, Schwangerschaft & Sexualität www.fapla-ag.ch</p> <p>Aarau: Laurenzentorgasse 7, Tel: 062 822 55 22 aarau@fapla-ag.ch</p> <p>Brugg: Stapferstrasse 2, Tel: 056 441 37 77 nfo@fapla-ag.ch</p>	<p>Information about Counselling services in the Canton of Basel-Landschaft: leaflet in 11 languages* Informationsblatt zum straflosen Schwangerschaftsabbruch</p> <p>Counselling for women under the age of 18 with an unwanted pregnancy:</p> <p>Kinder- und Jugendpsychiatrischer Dienst Liestal: 061 927 75 70 Bruderholz: 061 425 56 56</p>	<p>Counselling service for pregnancy conflict and guidance throughout the abortion process *:</p> <p>Universitätsspital Frauenklinik Spitalstrasse 21, 4056 Basel Link to the counselling offer</p> <p>Counselling for women under the age of 18 with an unwanted pregnancy:</p> <p>Kinder- und Jugendpsychiatrische Klinik Schaffhauser Rheinweg 55 4058 Basel Link to the counselling offer</p>	<p>Guide of the Health Department Solothurn in cases of unwanted pregnancies: Leitfaden ungewollt schwanger</p> <p>Counselling regarding pregnancy conflict:</p> <p>Beratungsstelle für Schwangerschaft, Familienplanung und Sexualität http://www.velso.ch/</p>
Cantonal counselling centers for pregnancy and birth				
	<p>Beratungsstelle für Familienplanung, Schwangerschaft & Sexualität www.fapla-ag.ch</p> <p>Aarau: Laurenzentorgasse 7, Tel. 062 822 55 22 aarau@fapla-ag.ch</p> <p>Brugg: Stapferstrasse 2,</p>	<p>The Canton of Basel-Landschaft offers two counselling centres for free and confidential counselling regarding pregnancy and relationships.</p> <p>Beratungsstellen für Schwangerschafts- und Beziehungsfragen</p>	<p>Offizielle Schwangerschaftsberatungsstelle Basel-Stadt</p> <p>Universitätsspital Frauenklinik Spitalstrasse 21 Tel. 061 265 93 93/94 info-schwanger@usb.ch Link to the pregnancy counselling centre</p>	<p>Beratungsstelle für Schwangerschaft, Familienplanung und Sexualität http://www.velso.ch/</p> <p>Solothurn: Rossmarktplatz 2 solothurn@velso.ch</p> <p>Olten: Hammerallee 19 olten@velso.ch</p>



	<p>Tel. 056 441 37 77 nfo@fapla-ag.ch</p> <p>Pregnancy counselling at the hospitals: Aarau Tel. 062 838 50 67 Baden Tel. 056 486 35 91</p>	<p>Liestal Tel. 061 921 60 13 Binningen, Tel. 061 413 24 00 www.bsb-bl.ch</p> <p>Pregnancy counselling at the hospitals: Liestal Tel. 061 925 25 25 Bruderholz Tel. 061 436 21 92</p>		<p>Grenchen: Solothurnstrasse 32 grenchen@velso.ch Breitenbach: Fehrenstrasse 12 breitenbach@velso.ch</p>
Prenatal care				
<p>www.praenatal-diagnostik.ch www.swissmom.ch www.babycenter.ch</p>				
Which costs are covered by your health insurance?				
<p>www.bag.admin.ch Themen>Krankenversicherung</p> <p>*</p>				
Antenatal classes				
<p>Antenatal classes and pregnancy gymnastics: http://birthcare.bgb-schweiz.ch/site/index.cfm</p>	<p>Antenatal classes (Geburtsvorbereitungskurse) at the hospital: Geburtsvorbereitungskurse Kantonsspital Aarau Kontakt Kurssekretariat Tel. 062 838 50 17 E-Mail: frauenklinik-kurse@ksa.ch Geburtsvorbereitungskurs Baden</p>	<p>Antenatal classes (Geburtsvorbereitungskurse) at the Kantonsspital Baselland Geburtsvorbereitungskurse Kantonsspital Baselland (Schwangerschaft und Geburt → Kurse und Infoabende → Kursangebot pro Standort) Infant care classes by the Red Cross: www.srk-baselland.ch > Kurse > Familie und Kind</p>	<p>Antenatal classes (Geburtsvorbereitungskurse) at the Frauenklinik, Universitätsspital Basel in German and English* Geburtsvorbereitungskurse der Frauenklinik BS</p>	<p>Antenatal classes (Geburtsvorbereitungskurse) at the hospital: Geburtsvorbereitungskurse Bürgerspital Solothurn Geburtsvorbereitungskurse Kantonsspital Olten Geburtsvorbereitungskurse Obach Klinik, Solothurn</p>



Switzerland	Aargau	Basel-Landschaft	Basel-Stadt	Solothurn
Where to give birth?				
<p><u>Birthing centre</u></p> <p>You can find a list of all birthing centres in Switzerland, listed by canton, on the following website: www.geburtshaus.ch</p> <p><u>Homebirths</u></p> <p>A midwife can be found through the homepage of the Swiss association of midwives*: http://www.hebamme.ch/de/elt/heb/freiehebammen.cfm?md=erw</p>	<p><u>Cantonal hospitals (Public hospitals)</u></p> <p>Kantonsspital Aarau Frauenklinik, Tel. 062 838 50 67, KSA - Frauenklinik Aarau Kantonsspital Baden, Tel. 056 486 35 91, Geburtshilfe Kantonsspital Baden</p> <p><u>Private hospitals</u></p> <p>Asana Spital, 5316 Leuggern, Tel. 056 269 40 00, Geburtshilfe Spital Leuggern</p> <p>Asana Spital, 5737 Menziken, Tel. 062 765 31 31, www.spitalmenziken.ch</p> <p>Klinik Villa im Park, 4852 Rothrist, Tel. 062 785 66 66 Geburtshilfe Villa im Park</p> <p>Gesundheitszentrum Fricktal: Rheinfeld, Laufenburg & Frick Frauenklinik Gesundheitszentrum Fricktal</p>	<p><u>Cantonal hospitals (Public hospitals)</u></p> <p>Kantonsspital Liestal mit Beleghebammen-System, Tel. 061 925 25 25, www.ksli.ch > Frauen</p> <p>Kantonsspital Bruderholz, Tel. 061 436 36 36, Kantonsspital Bruderholz > Frauenklinik > Zentrum für Mutter & Kind</p> <p>Kantonsspital Laufen, Tel. 061 765 32 32, www.ksla.ch > Angebot > Geburtshilfe</p> <p><u>Private hospitals</u></p> <p>ITA-Wegman-Klinik, 4144 Arlesheim, Tel. 061 705 71 11, www.geburtshaus-iwk.ch</p> <p>Ergolz-Klinik, 4410 Liestal, Tel. 061 906 92 92, www.ergolz-klinik.ch > Unser Angebot > Gynäkologie</p> <p><u>Birthing centres</u></p> <p>Geburtshaus Ambra, Unterdorfstrasse 25, 4443 Wittlinsburg, Tel. 062 299 29</p>	<p><u>Cantonal hospitals (Public hospitals)</u></p> <p>Universitätsspital Basel, Tel. 061 265 90 49, Frauenklinik : Universitätsspital Basel</p> <p><u>Private hospitals</u></p> <p>Bethesda Spital, Tel. 061 315 22 22, Geburtsklinik Bethesda Spital</p> <p>Note: Midwiferies are open to any health insurance category and across cantonal borders.</p> <p><u>Birthing centres</u></p> <p>Geburtshaus Basel, Schweizergasse 8, 4054 Basel, Tel. 061 462 47 11, www.geburtsstaette.ch</p> <p><u>Homebirths</u></p> <p>A list of midwives in the region of Basel is available by calling 061 702 07 60 or online</p>	<p><u>Cantonal hospitals (Public hospitals)</u></p> <p>Bürgerspital Solothurn, Tel. 032 627 44 71, Frauenklinik Solothurn</p> <p>Kantonsspital Olten, Tel. 062 311 43 89, Frauenklinik Olten</p> <p><u>Birthing centres</u></p> <p>There is currently no birthing centre in the Canton of Solothurn.</p> <p><u>Homebirths</u></p> <p>A midwife can be found through the homepage of the Swiss association of midwives*: http://www.hebamme.ch/de/elt/heb/freiehebammen.cfm?md=erw</p>



	<p>Kreisspital für das Freiamt, 5630 Muri, Tel. 056 675 14 21 www.spital-muri.ch--> Geburtshilfe</p> <p>Hirslanden Klinik Aarau, 5001 Aarau, Tel. 062 836 70 00 Geburt in der Hirslanden Klinik Aarau</p> <p><u>Birthing centres</u> Geburtshus Storchenäsch Henschikerstrasse 12, 5504 Othmarsingen, Tel. 062 885 80 80, http://www.storchenaescht.ch</p> <p><u>Homebirths</u></p> <p>A midwife can be found through the homepage of the Swiss association of midwives*: http://www.hebamme.ch/de/elt/ heb/freiehebammen.cfm?md= erw</p>	<p>29, www.gebaeren.ch Geburtshaus Tagmond, Hauptstrasse 26, 4133 Pratteln, Tel. 061 823 10 10, www.tagmond.ch</p> <p>Geburtshaus Rundum GmbH, Wahlenstrasse 70, 4242 Laufen, Tel. 061 761 83 63, www.geburtshausrundum.ch</p> <p>Geburtshaus der Ita Wegman Klinik, Pfeffingerweg 1, 4144 Arlesheim, Tel. 061 705 72 46, geburtshaus-iwk.ch</p> <p><u>Homebirths</u> A list of midwives in the region of Basel is available by calling 061 702 07 60 or online www.baslerhebamme.ch > Hebammensuche</p> <p>The midwives of the birthing centre Tagmond are also available for homebirths: www.tagmond.ch > Angebote > Hausgeburt</p>	<p>www.baslerhebamme.ch > Hebammensuche</p>	
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Switzerland	Aargau	Basel-Landschaft	Basel-Stadt	Solothurn
Premature birth				
Elternverein Känguruh: www.fruehgeborene.ch	Both cantonal hospitals (public hospitals) in Aarau and Baden have a neonatal intensive care unit. There are no special groups for parents of premature babies in the Canton of Aargau.	Neonatal family guidance through the Universitäts-Kinderspital beider Basel. Neonatologische Familienbegleitung	Neonatal family guidance through the Universitäts-Kinderspital beider Basel. Neonatologische Familienbegleitung	Free neonatal- project by the Arkadis foundation for parents living in the Canton of Solothurn. neonatal-project of the Arkadis foundation
Parents of twins and multiples				
www.twinmedia.ch Swiss association for parents of multiples http://www.mehrlingsverein.ch/	Twinparents-Club Aargau/Solothurn http://www.zwillingseltern.ch/			Twinparents-Club Aargau/Solothurn http://www.zwillingseltern.ch/
Postnatal depression				
www.postnatale-depression.ch	Gesprächsgruppe Postnatale / postpartale Depression Familienzentrum Karussell Haselstrasse 6 5400 Baden Infolyer zur Gesprächsgruppe Postnatale Depressionen		The department of gynecological social medicine and psychosomatics of the Unispital Basel offers advice to women with postnatal depressions during their consultation hours. Beratung bei psychischen Problemen nach der Geburt	



Switzerland	Aargau	Basel-Landschaft	Basel-Stadt	Solothurn
Helpline „Family Start beider Basel“				
FamilyStart HELPLINE: 0848 622 622 (daily from 8am to 8pm) *				
Breastfeeding counselling				
<p>La Leche League * www.stillberatung.ch Stiftung Stillen* www.stillfoerderung.ch</p> <p>A breastfeeding consultant can be found on the website of the Swiss association of lactation consultants : http://www.stillen.ch/de/</p>	<p>The women’s clinic at the Kantonsspital Aarau (KSA) and the Kantonsspital Baden have breastfeeding consultants who will assist you Stillberatungen im KSA Stillberatungen im Kantonsspital Baden</p> <p>The KSA website also has an informative leaflet on the benefits of breastfeeding: Infolyer Stillen</p>	<p>The Kantonsspital Baselland provides a leaflet with information on the 10 steps to successful breastfeeding : Die 10-Schritte zum erfolgreichen Stillen PDF</p> <p>Assistance by a breastfeeding consultant at the Kantonsspital Baselland Stillberatung am Kantonsspital Baselland</p>	<p>Assistance by a breastfeeding consultant at the Universitätsspital Basel Stillberatung am Unispital Basel</p> <p>The Universitätsspital Basel also offers the possibility to donate any extra milk to a milk-bank.</p>	<p>The Bürgerspital Solothurn is a breastfeeding-friendly clinic.</p> <p>During your stay you will be visited by a lactation consultant. Stillberatungen im Bürgerspital Solothurn</p>

Book recommendations

Our book recommendations are generally for books that are only available in German. Where possible we’ve listed the English translation or an equivalent instead.

On the topic of twins

„Das doppelte Mäxchen- Ein Kindersachbuch zum Thema Zwillinge“
 von Regina Masaracchia und Insa Wiegand, Edition Riedenburg, 2009.

On the topic of Breastfeeding:

“The womanly art of breastfeeding”,
 La Leche League International, 2010.