

## Pregnancy: A Guide to Decision-Making

The emotional reaction to a positive pregnancy test varies. You may feel happy, sad, depressed, scared, angry, or guilty. You may feel a mixture of all of these emotions and feel confused about what to do. When you find out that you are pregnant, you have to make a decision that will greatly affect your life. This handout presents your options and also raises some questions for you to think about help you make the choice that is best for you.

If you think you may be pregnant, you should have a **pregnancy test** as soon as possible to confirm or rule out the diagnosis of pregnancy. Your period can be late for a variety of reasons other than pregnancy. Stress, travel, amount of exercise, and/or illness; are some frequent causes of a missed or late period. If it has been more than three months since your last period and your pregnancy test is negative you should make an appointment for a gynecological evaluation in the Women's Health Clinic at McKinley Health Center or with the health care provider of your choice. As a University of Illinois student, or SPOUSE of a University of Illinois student, you may have a pregnancy test at McKinley Health Center. Other community resources are listed on page three of this handout.

You should discuss the results of your pregnancy test with your health care provider or a pregnancy counselor. This person will listen, answer your questions, and assist you in thinking through the decisions you need to make. Additionally, it may be helpful to talk with someone else - your partner, a friend, family member, educator, or member of the clergy. Sometimes it is helpful to bring a trusted confidante with you to the pregnancy counseling appointment.

### **You have three basic choices**

- Continue the pregnancy and parent the child
- Continue the pregnancy and place the child for adoption
- Terminate the pregnancy by having an abortion

There may be several questions that are going through your mind, including: "What am I going to do?" or "What do I need to know?" Before you make a decision, it is important to clarify your feelings, think about your plans and dreams for the future, and then evaluate your thoughts, values, and beliefs as they relate to each of the three choices. Sometimes it is helpful to write your thoughts and feelings down on paper. Listing your options and your feelings about each option may help you think more clearly. You may wish to share your list of thoughts with someone you trust.

It is important to know how far along you are in your pregnancy. Your health care provider or pregnancy counselor can assist you in determining this. It is best to begin prenatal care or have an abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. It is important to have accurate information as you work through your decision.

### **Here is some information on the three basic choices that may be helpful to consider.**

#### **1. If you are considering parenting - Questions to consider**

- Am I capable of the emotional maturity and commitment it takes to be a parent?
- What are my financial resources?
- What are my living arrangements?
- Will the father of the baby be a helpful supportive presence or will I be a single mother?
- Will the people close to me support this decision? If not, how will I cope?
- Will I be able to raise my child and still accomplish the goals I have planned for myself?

The McKinley Health Center packet relating to pregnancy contains detailed information about pregnancy and local providers of obstetrical care.

#### **2. If you are considering adoption - Questions to consider**

- Will the people close to me support this decision? If not, how will I cope?
- Is there someone I can depend on and trust with my feelings?
- Will I feel that helping my child have parents who want it and can care for it is a good decision for both of us?

- Do I have the emotional strength to cope with continuing the pregnancy, giving birth, and relinquishing my child to someone else?

Adoption is not an immediate decision, but rather one that evolves for each individual birth mother as her pregnancy progresses. You can decide to handle the adoption privately through an attorney (in some states) or through an adoption agency. It is important for a woman to be comfortable with the agency or attorney she chooses.

Further information about adoption can be found in the McKinley Health Center handout on adoption. A good web site for information is <http://www.cradle.org/>.

Whether you are considering parenting or adoption, remember that early prenatal care is critical. Early prenatal care increases the likelihood of a healthy baby, decreases the risks of complications during the pregnancy and delivery, and helps prepare you for childbirth.

### 3. If you are considering abortion - Questions to consider

- Can I accept abortion as the right choice for me at this time?
- Will the people close to me support this decision? If not, how will I cope?
- Do I want to postpone being a mother until I feel more capable of parenting?
- What are my feelings likely to be in one year? Five years?

Detailed information about abortion can be found in the McKinley Health Center packet on Abortion. A web site for accurate information on abortion is sponsored by the National Abortion Federation and is located at <http://www.prochoice.org/>.

## Resource List

Whatever you decide, make the choice that is best for you. In the end, the final decision is yours, and should be one that you can live with for the rest of your life. These resources also offer counseling as a service.

### University Resources

<b>McKinley Health Center</b> 1109 South Lincoln Avenue Urbana, IL 61801 <a href="http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu">www.mckinley.uiuc.edu</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home pregnancy test kits available in Health Resource Centers</li> <li>• Pregnancy options counseling offered in Women's Health</li> <li>• Termination referral list available</li> <li>• Psychological counseling available in Mental Health</li> </ul>	Women's Health 333-2700  Mental Health 333-2705
<b>Counseling Center (U of I)</b> Student Services Building 600 East John Street, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Champaign, IL 61820 <a href="http://www.couns.uiuc.edu/">www.couns.uiuc.edu/</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychological Counseling Services</li> </ul>	333-2704

### Community Resources

<b>Carle Clinic</b> 602 West University Avenue Urbana, IL 61801 <a href="http://www.carle.com">www.carle.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contraception; pregnancy tests; prenatal care</li> <li>• Obstetrician/Gynecologists, Nurse-midwives and Family Practice MD's provide prenatal care and perform deliveries</li> <li>• Deliveries at Carle Foundation Hospital</li> </ul>	OB Services 383-3140  Family Practice 383-3170
<b>Champaign-Urbana Public Health District</b> 201 W. Kenyon Road Champaign, IL 61820 <a href="http://www.cuphd.org">www.cuphd.org</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pregnancy tests; prenatal, childbirth and post-natal education programs and home visits</li> <li>• Enrollment in financial assistance programs</li> </ul>	352-7961
<b>Christie Clinic</b> 101 West University Avenue Champaign, IL 61820 <a href="http://www.christieclinic.com">www.christieclinic.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contraception; pregnancy tests; prenatal care by Obstetrician/Gynecologists and Nurse-midwives.</li> <li>• Delivery at Provena-Covenant Medical Center or Carle Foundation Hospital</li> </ul>	366-1255
<b>Frances Nelson Health Center</b> 810 Bloomington Road Champaign, IL 61820	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contraception; pregnancy tests; prenatal care with care provided by UIUC Family Practice residents and Carle Clinic Family Practice physicians and delivery at Carle Foundation Hospital</li> </ul>	356-1558

## Community Resources (continued)

<b>Planned Parenthood of East Central Illinois</b> 302 East Stoughton Champaign, IL 61820 www.ppeci.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contraception; pregnancy testing; counseling options; nurse midwives provide prenatal care, which is then transferred to Carle Clinic and delivery at Carle Foundation Hospital</li> <li>• Enrollment in financial assistance programs</li> <li>• Medical and surgical termination services</li> </ul>	359-8022
<b>Provena Medical Group</b> 1405 W. Park Street, Suite 201 Urbana, IL 61801	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obstetrician-gynecologists</li> </ul>	344-6451
<b>Women's Health Practice</b> 2125 South Neil Street Champaign, IL 61820	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contraception; pregnancy tests; prenatal care with delivery at Carle Foundation Hospital and Provena-Covenant Medical Center</li> <li>• Medical and surgical termination services</li> <li>• Obstetrician/Gynecologists, Nurse-midwife, and physician assistant</li> </ul>	356-3736

## Adoption Services

Organization	Services	Affiliation
<b>AAA Friends in Adoption</b> 1-800-982-3678 www.friendsinadoption.net	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free confidential services to pregnant women and couples</li> </ul>	Private/nonprofit
<b>The Baby Fold</b> 108 Willow Street Normal, IL 61761 309-452-1170	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counseling, medical care, housing, legal matters discussed</li> <li>• Financial assistance possible</li> </ul>	United Methodist Church
<b>Catholic Social Services</b> 1315 A Curt Champaign, IL 61821 217-352-5179	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placement of infants and children</li> <li>• Referral to St. Monica's Maternity Center in Springfield Illinois</li> </ul>	Peoria Diocese
<b>The Cradle</b> 800-272-3534 www.cradle.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open adoptions</li> <li>• Assistance with expenses and medical expenses</li> </ul>	Independent/Private adoptions
<b>Department of Children and Family Services</b> 2125 South First Street Champaign, IL 61820 217-278-5500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption and referral information</li> </ul>	State of Illinois agency
<b>Lifelink/Bensenville Home Society</b> 905 South Russell Champaign, IL 61821 217-352-5283 www.lifelink.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption and referral information, primarily working with international adoption</li> </ul>	United Church of Christ
<b>Lutheran Social Services of Illinois</b> 103 South Country Fair Drive Champaign, IL 61821 217-398-3011 www.lssi.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption and referral information</li> <li>• Pregnancy counseling and guidance</li> </ul>	Lutheran Church
<b>Jewish Children's Bureau</b> Suite 200 255 Revere Drive Northbrook, IL 60062	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counseling and guidance</li> </ul>	Jewish Synagogue
<b>Illinois Lawyer Finder</b> 217-525-5297 www.illinoislawyerfinder.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides attorney referral lists</li> </ul>	Illinois State Bar Association

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu>