

What are the advantages of having a GP look after me?

- ◆ Care by a highly trained, skilled professional
- ◆ A friend to confide in - a lifetime of personalised care
- ◆ Your personal guide to assist you through the complicated maze of medical services
- ◆ Care of each individual as part of the whole family
- ◆ Care of each symptom in relation to the whole body



Who are "Shire GPs"?

"Shire GPs" is another name for the Sutherland Division of General Practice. We are an association of General Practitioners in the Sutherland Shire and we aim to improve your health care in the community or in the hospital.

There are approximately 200 family doctors throughout the Sutherland Shire. All are highly trained and they have vast experience in caring for you and your family.

If you do not have a family doctor, please contact the Division on (02) 9525-4011 for a list of Practices in your locality



YOUR POSTNATAL CHECK



Your Postnatal Check

All new mothers are encouraged to have a check-up 6 weeks after the birth of their babies. For Antenatal Clinic patients this service is usually provided by your family doctor, unless advised otherwise by the Maternity Staff.

Make an appointment with your GP six (6) weeks after having your baby (check with your GPs receptionist if extra appointment time is needed for this). Please ensure that you bring your baby's Blue Book with you when you visit your family doctor.

This check-up is very important. It involves discussion of any problems you may be having, followed by a physical examination. This includes a blood pressure and breast check and an internal examination to ensure everything has returned to normal. A pap smear will be done if it is due.

At this stage it is also an opportunity to discuss your baby's vaccinations and to arrange future contraception for yourself.

Contraception Choices After Your Baby

Your fertility could return by 6 weeks after the birth of your baby, even if you are breastfeeding and haven't had a period.

Your GP can discuss the various methods of contraception available at your postnatal check. Your choice depends on your personal views and needs and your medical background.

In summary, the methods available are as follows:

Hormonal Methods

1. The 'combined' oral contraceptive pill. This contains oestrogen and progesterone and is not recommended in breastfeeding because of reduced milk flow and potential hormonal effects on the baby.
2. The 'mini pill'. This contains only progesterone. It is suitable for use when breastfeeding and for those women unable to take the combined pill.

3. Injectable Progesterone (Depoprovera). This is also suitable in breastfeeding, provides very effective contraception and only requires an injection every 3 months.

Barrier Methods

- ♦ Condoms.
- ♦ Diaphragms. These can be fitted at the time of the postnatal check. If used prior to pregnancy refitting will be required.

Natural Methods

Natural family planning may be used in the same way as prior to pregnancy. It is complicated by breastfeeding and the high failure rates need to be borne in mind.

IUDs

Intra-uterine devices can be inserted after the postnatal check. The suitability of this method for you should be discussed with your GP. Nowadays IUDs can last up to 10