



**The Hon. Greg Hunt MP**  
Minister for Health

2 March 2018

**Better maternity services for Australian women**

Following extensive work by medical experts and industry stakeholders, the Turnbull Government has released new national medical guidelines for the care of pregnant women, while also detailing a new approach to maternity services.

The *Clinical Practice Guidelines on Pregnancy Care* provides evidence-based recommendations, reflecting the latest scientific evidence, for all health professionals caring for pregnant women.

This information will support midwives, obstetricians, GPs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers and allied health professionals

The guidelines recognise that body mass index prior to pregnancy, and weight gain during pregnancy, are among important determinants of health for both mothers and babies.

Health professionals are recommended to discuss weight gain, diet and physical activity with all pregnant women. They also say all women should be offered the opportunity to be weighed at every antenatal visit, and also encourage self-monitoring of weight.

The expert recommendations also encourage routine Hepatitis C testing at the first antenatal visit for pregnant women, and discourage routine testing for Vitamin D status in the absence of a specific indication.

These guidelines will support our medical professional to continue to offer Australia families a high standard of care.

Today we also launch the start of a new National Strategic Approach to Maternity Services, led by the Commonwealth Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, Professor Debra Thoms.

We will work with state and territory governments in developing this new plan, alongside our medical professionals, including the Royal Australian New Zealand College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists, the Australian College of Midwives, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Australian Medical Association, Maternity Consumer Network, and Maternity Choices Australia.

To be finalised by mid-2019, the strategy will guide national maternity services policy, aligning delivery of services with available evidence and monitoring performance and outcomes so that progress can be measured and improvements identified.

The strategy will also build on the maternity support services provided by the Australian Government.

These include the pregnancy, birth and baby helpline and recent investments to provide a mental health assessment for all pregnant women, a home visit after birth by a registered midwife, GP or obstetrician and an increased rebate for managing a pregnancy.

I am pleased to be able to make these announcements today at the National Women's Health Summit in Sydney.

The Pregnancy Care Guidelines can be downloaded from the Department's [website](#).

(ENDS)

**National Strategic Approach to Maternity Services**  
Advisory Group

**Co-Chairs**

David A Ellwood  
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Professor of Obstetrics & Gynaecology,  
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Helen McCarthy  
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Stream, South East Sydney Local Health  
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1. Australian College of Midwives (ACM)
2. Royal Australian New Zealand College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (RANZCOG)
3. Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)
4. My Midwives
5. Maternity Choices Australia
6. Australian Medical Association (AMA)
7. Perinatal Society Australia New Zealand (PSANZ)
8. Congress Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM)
9. Midwifery and Maternity Provider Organisation Australia
10. Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)
11. Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
12. Homebirth Australia
13. Refugee and Migrant Research Program, Healthy Mothers Healthy Families research group, Murdoch Children Research Institute
14. Rural Doctors Association of Australia
15. Safe Motherhood for All

16. Women's Healthcare & Children's Healthcare Australasia
17. Maternity Consumer network
18. Council of Remote Area Nurses plus (CRANAPlus)
19. Australian Government Department of Health
20. Safer Care Victoria
21. Australian Private Hospitals Association (APHA)
22. Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia
23. Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF)