



Effective communication with your maternity team is crucial for a positive pregnancy and childbirth experience.

Here are some tips to help parents communicate well with their healthcare providers:

1. Be Prepared for Appointments

- Before each appointment, write down any questions or concerns you have. Bring a list of topics you want to discuss to ensure nothing is overlooked during your visit.

2. Ask Questions

- Don't hesitate to ask questions, no matter how small or seemingly obvious. If something is unclear, ask for clarification. Your maternity team is there to support and educate you.

- If you fully understand all the checks and tests you undergo whilst you're pregnant, you'll be more in tune with your body and will be able to recognise any potential problems a lot faster.

3. Be Honest About Your Concerns

- Share any worries or anxieties you have about your pregnancy, birth, or postnatal period. Your healthcare providers need to know how you're feeling to offer the best care and support.

4. Express Your Preferences

- Clearly communicate your preferences for your birth plan, pain management, and any other aspects of your care. Discuss these early on, so your maternity team understands your wishes.

5. Bring Your Partner or Support Person

- Having your partner or a trusted support person with you during appointments can help ensure that all your questions are addressed. They can also help take notes or ask additional questions.

6. Know Who to Call and When

- Every hospital has a different procedure so keep a record of what number to call in each circumstance. Most hospitals have an Early Pregnancy Unit for under 16 weeks, out of hours then A&E is recommended if there's an emergency. You should be given a number for Triage as well as Labour Ward for when you think you may have started labour. Check with your hospital what their policy

is for Out of Hours as you should always be able to contact a member of your maternity team day and night.

7. Keep a Record of Your Pregnancy

- Maintain a pregnancy journal or app to track your symptoms, weight, blood pressure, and other important details. This information can be valuable to your healthcare providers during appointments.

8. Discuss Communication Preferences

- Let your maternity team know how you prefer to receive information and updates, whether through in-person discussions, phone calls, or emails. This ensures that communication is clear and effective.

9. Follow Up on Tests and Results

- Ask when you can expect test results and who to contact if you haven't received them. If you don't hear back within the expected time frame, follow up to ensure nothing is missed.

10. Be Open About Your Lifestyle and Health

- Share important information about your lifestyle, such as diet, exercise, mental health, and any medications or supplements you're taking. This helps your maternity team provide personalised care.

11. Don't Be Afraid to Advocate for Yourself

- If you feel your concerns are not being addressed, speak up. It's important to advocate for your health and your

baby's well-being. Don't hesitate to ask for a second opinion if necessary.

- If you feel you are not being listened to, ask to speak to the Head of Midwifery or Duty Manager.

12. Discuss Emergency Protocols

- Ask your maternity team to explain what will happen in case of an emergency during pregnancy or childbirth. Understanding the protocols can help you feel more prepared and less anxious.

13. Keep an Open Line of Communication

- Maintain regular contact with your maternity team, especially if you notice any changes in your condition. Report any unusual symptoms, even if they seem minor.

14. Review Your Birth Plan Together

- Go over your birth plan with your healthcare provider during one of your appointments. This ensures that everyone is on the same page and that your wishes are clearly understood.
- Make sure each member of staff has read your medical notes and birth plan at the start of each appointment.

15. Understand Your Rights

- Educate yourself about your rights as a patient. You have the right to be informed, to refuse or request certain treatments, and to be treated with respect and dignity.

16. Seek Cultural Sensitivity

- If you have specific cultural or religious practices you want to observe during pregnancy or childbirth, discuss these with your maternity team. They should respect and accommodate your wishes whenever possible.

17. Provide Feedback

- After appointments or any interactions, provide feedback if something went well or if you felt your concerns were not adequately addressed. Constructive feedback helps improve the care you receive.

18. Establish a Supportive Relationship

- Build a rapport with your maternity team by being respectful and approachable. A positive, collaborative relationship can make it easier to navigate your pregnancy and ensure that your voice is heard.

By following these tips, you can foster clear, effective communication with your maternity team, helping to ensure a smooth and supportive pregnancy experience.