



Niitty – Developing a Peer-based Family  
Training Model for Immigrants

# **MONITORING PREGNANCY AT THE MATERNITY CLINIC**

Raskauden seuranta äitiysneuvolassa



## WHAT DOES A MATERNITY CLINIC DO?

The maternity clinic offers services organised by the municipality. Everyone in Finland with a residence permit is entitled to these services.

In some regions, undocumented migrants are also entitled to the support of a maternity clinic → please don't hesitate to contact a maternity clinic near you and ask about it!

The purpose of the maternity clinic is to monitor the well-being of the mother and foetus and to safeguard the health of both.

If any problems are discovered during the pregnancy, the clinic will organise the appropriate treatment and assistance as quickly as possible. If needed, you will be directed to a maternity outpatient clinic.

The maternity clinic offers support for the whole family. Fathers are welcome to accompany the mother



## IT PAYS TO VISIT THE MATERNITY CLINIC!

Visits to a maternity clinic are free for the customer.

You are entitled to some of Kela's benefits (such as the maternity grant, i.e. the maternity package or cash benefit) only if you visit the maternity clinic.



The duration of pregnancy is counted in weeks. The counting starts on the first day of your last menstruation. The due date is 40+0, that is, 40 weeks plus zero days.

The pregnancy is considered full-term if delivery takes place between weeks 37+0—41+6 of pregnancy.



## **VISITS DURING PREGNANCY**

**When you find out you are pregnant, please contact a maternity clinic in your area!**

**During your pregnancy, you will visit the maternity clinic about 11 times:**

8–10 weeks – first visit to a nurse

13–18 weeks – an extensive medical examination (by a nurse and doctor)

22–24 weeks – a visit to a nurse (you will receive a certificate of pregnancy for Kela applications)

26–28 weeks – a visit to a nurse

30–32 weeks – a visit to the maternity clinic, or the nurse makes a house call

35–36 weeks – appointment with a doctor

37–41 weeks – appointment with a nurse every 1–2 weeks

**The baby is born at a hospital**

1–7 days after childbirth the nurse makes a house call

5–12 weeks after childbirth you have a follow-up check at the maternity clinic

**During your pregnancy, you will visit a doctor about two times.**



## **ULTRASOUND SCANS ARE USED TO FIND OUT THE BABY'S RISK OF SERIOUS ILLNESSES**

Pregnant women are offered various medical examinations to find out if the foetus has a risk of certain serious illnesses or syndromes. Your maternity clinic will provide you with more detailed information about these examinations, but often these screenings are offered as follows:

1. Screening for chromosomal abnormalities using the 'combined test' (blood sample and ultrasound scan between pregnancy weeks 9–13)
2. 'Structural ultrasound' between pregnancy weeks 18–24 when it is possible to assess the baby's organs, such as the brain and heart.

Participating in these examinations is optional.

If the examinations reveal anything alarming, you will be directed to further medical examinations.



## WHAT THINGS ARE MONITORED AT THE MATERNITY CLINIC AND WHY?



### Blood pressure

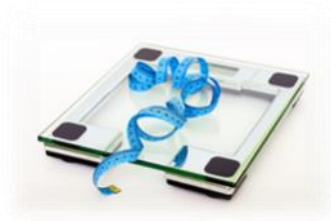
Too high blood pressure can be a sign of pre-eclampsia, which untreated may be life-threatening to both the mother and baby

### Urine test

A urine test is used to assess the mother's sugar and protein levels. If there are sugars in the urine, the mother may have a weakened tolerance for sugars and this must be dealt with. It may be a sign of gestational diabetes. If there is protein in the urine, this may be a sign of pre-eclampsia.

### Weight:

A suitable increase in weight is a sign that mother and baby are well. Ask the nurse what is a suitable increase in weight for you. On average, the mother should gain about 8–12 kg in weight.



## **Haemoglobin and blood samples**

During the early stages of pregnancy, blood samples of the mother are used to screen for certain infections and to check her blood type. If necessary, blood samples are also taken later during the pregnancy.

Haemoglobin is examined using a blood sample taken from the fingertip. Low haemoglobin can be a sign of anaemia. This can be cured by taking an iron supplement.

## **Baby's growth and position in the womb**

The baby's growth is assessed by feeling his or her head under your belly. This helps to work out the baby's position. Before the birth, the baby should be head down in the womb.



The baby's growth is also estimated by using a measuring tape to measure the distance from the top of your pubic bone to the top of your uterus.

## **Lifestyle, the mother's health and how the parents are doing**

The mother's health and lifestyle are discussed during every visit! Please talk about your feelings openly. The nurse will support you and your partner throughout your pregnancy.





## HOUSE CALLS

A house call is when the nurse from the clinic comes to the family's home to talk about and advise on matters concerning having a baby, taking care of the baby, parenthood and the parents' well-being.

House calls are made towards the later stages of pregnancy and after the baby is born.





## **FAMILY TRAINING**

Family training means activities in groups which consist of several families expecting a baby. It is organised for all first-time parents.

Family training includes prenatal classes which can be organised, for example, in a maternity hospital.

Issues concerning pregnancy, childbirth, child care and much more are discussed during family training.

Family training can be provided by a maternity clinic nurse or another specialist.

The parent group activities will continue after the birth.



## THE ROLE OF THE MATERNITY CLINIC AFTER CHILDBIRTH

When you are about to leave the hospital and go home after the delivery, please call the nurse at your maternity clinic. You can make an appointment for the nurse to make a house call.

If you have any questions about pregnancy, childbirth and recovering from childbirth, please call the maternity clinic's nurse up until the follow-up check after the birth.

The baby will be transferred to a child health clinic after a nurse from your child health clinic has made a house call, or you have visited the clinic with the baby around the age of 2 weeks.

The operations of maternity and child health clinics are organised differently depending on the locality. In some towns or municipalities, the same nurse works in both the maternity and child health clinic.



## YOU CAN TALK ABOUT ANYTHING AT THE MATERNITY CLINIC



At the maternity clinic, you can discuss everything related to health and well-being.

You can also talk about any worries you may have. If the nurse can't help you, she or he will direct you to another specialist!

### The topics discussed at the maternity clinic include:

- \* Your relationship with your partner and your partner's well-being
  - \* Lifestyle and its effects on pregnancy
  - \* The pregnant mother's mental well-being
    - \* The needs of the coming baby
- \* Feelings and expectations relating to childbirth
  - \* The family's support network



# Niitty Project 2018–2020

<https://projects.tuni.fi/niitty/>

[www.facebook.com/niittyhanke/](http://www.facebook.com/niittyhanke/)

Project Manager Irmeli Nieminen. E-mail: [irmeli.nieminen@tuni.fi](mailto:irmeli.nieminen@tuni.fi)

Specialist Anna Aikasalo. E-mail: [anna.aikasalo@tuni.fi](mailto:anna.aikasalo@tuni.fi)

Specialist Jasmin Kaljadin. E-mail: [jasmin.kaljadin@tampere.fi](mailto:jasmin.kaljadin@tampere.fi)

Sources and further information:

Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL). 2013. Äitiysneuvolaopas. Suosituksia äitiysneuvolatoimintaan. Opas 29.

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Sikiöseulonnat. Available: <https://stm.fi/seulonnat/sikioseulonnat>

