

Occupational therapy in pregnancy and early parenting



the women's
the royal women's hospital

What is occupational therapy?

Occupational therapy helps you do the everyday things that matter most - like looking after yourself, caring for your child, working, resting, and doing things you enjoy. These activities can become harder during pregnancy, after birth, or when you're living with illness, injury, disability, or other major life changes.

Occupational therapists (OTs) understand that how you spend your time - especially when caring for yourself and your baby - has a big impact on your health and wellbeing.

How can occupational therapy help?

Becoming a parent brings many changes: new routines, new responsibilities, and often, new challenges. Occupational therapy can help you feel more confident and capable during this time.

This support is especially helpful if you're recovering from birth, living with a health condition, or finding it hard to take part in your usual, or new parenting activities.

Occupational therapists can support you to:

- adjust to changes in your body, energy, identity, and daily routine
- make everyday tasks like showering, dressing, cooking, and caring for your baby easier
- find solutions when parenting feels overwhelming, painful, or exhausting
- use simple tools and strategies to save energy, reduce pain, and stay organised
- set up your space so it feels safe, calm, and easy to manage
- stay connected to the people, routines, and activities that are meaningful to you.

Who is this service for?

Occupational therapy at the Women's supports pregnant people and new parents who have trouble doing daily tasks. This includes caring for yourself, your baby, or staying safe at home.

This service might be right for you if:

- you have a disability or health condition and:
 - feel pain, get tired easily, or have trouble moving
 - find it hard to remember things, focus, or learn new tasks
 - use a wheelchair, walking aid or other equipment and want support with parenting tasks
- you want help with everyday activities like:
 - managing your energy, stress, or pain
 - keeping up with the things that matter to you while your body changes
 - preparing for new routines or handling changes in your daily life
- you want help caring for your baby, including:
 - feeding, bathing, or lifting your baby
 - learning about special (adaptive) equipment to make parenting easier
 - feeling more confident and independent as a parent
 - finding ways to parent that work for your body, values, and lifestyle
- you're planning for your hospital stay and:
 - may need extra support while in hospital
 - may need help to go home safely.

If you're not sure if occupational therapy is right for you, speak with your care team. They can answer your questions or help organise a referral.

What can you expect at your first appointment?

Your first appointment takes about 45 to 60 minutes. We'll talk about your health, daily life, and what matters to you in pregnancy and early parenting. This might include:

- your daily routines and parenting goals
- how your body, health, or home affect what you do every day
- what already helps you, such as people, services or equipment
- ideas to make parenting tasks easier and safer.

You can also tell us:

- what's most important to you
- what support you have or expect to have
- any tasks or routines you find hard or want help with.

For more information and advice

Occupational Therapy Department

Level 1, Royal Women's Hospital
Cnr Grattan St and Flemington Road
Parkville, VIC 3052
T: (03) 8345 3160

Visit our website

You can find helpful information and fact sheets on our website at thewomens.org.au

Do you need an interpreter?



You can ask for an interpreter if you need one.

Family Violence Support

1800 Respect National Helpline

You can get help if you have experienced sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

You can call any time of day or night.

1800 737 732

1800respect.org.au