

Information for Teenage Girls: Why am I being asked if I might be pregnant?

This leaflet explains more about why we ask you if you might be pregnant and why we routinely undertake pregnancy testing in girls who have started their periods or who are aged 12 years or over.

If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor, nurse or radiographer caring for you.

Why am I being asked if I might be pregnant?

When you come into hospital we ask you questions about your health, any medicines you are taking and any allergies you may have. This is so that we can ensure your safety whilst you are in hospital. We also need to be sure that you are not pregnant as having an anaesthetic, chemotherapy or an x-ray whilst you are pregnant carries some risks.

Girls under the age of 16 do get pregnant. We understand that most teenage girls are not having sex, so it is not possible for them to be pregnant. We do not know who is and who isn't sexually active, so to ensure we care for you safely we ask you if you might be pregnant and if we can undertake a pregnancy test.

What are the risks?

Even within 8 weeks of becoming pregnant there are many changes that happen within the body. How drugs affect the body and how the body deals with them can be different during pregnancy. Some drugs that we use during anaesthesia (when you are put to sleep during your operation) may damage an unborn baby and are best avoided. There is also a chance of miscarriage (losing the baby) if you have an operation, chemotherapy or an x-ray during the early weeks of pregnancy.

Will I have to have a pregnancy test?

All girls who have started their periods, or who are aged 12 years or older will be asked to provide a sample of urine for a pregnancy test. Although there may be a small number of pregnancies in this age group, we believe that, testing all girls is the most effective way of avoiding the risk of harm.

For most girls the test will be negative showing that they are not pregnant and your operation, test or treatment will go ahead as planned. For a small number of young people the test may be positive. In that case we would then have to think very carefully about the best way to proceed and to make sure that the right care is organised to help you with your pregnancy.

You have a right to refuse a pregnancy test but we would want to discuss with you the reasons why. This is in order to help us to make the best decisions on how to proceed with your care and keep you safe.

Who will ask me?

The doctor, nurse or radiographer will discuss this with you and your parent/carer. You will be asked to provide a urine specimen which will be tested in the clinic room in the ward or department. If you would like further information or to discuss in private away from your parent, please let the doctor, nurse or radiographer know.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111



Reference: PAE_IFTG_01 **Published:** March 2018 **Review date:** March 2020