

# Pregnancy Information

Worrying about whether you might be pregnant or not can be a stressful situation if you have had unprotected sexual intercourse, or if you aren't sure whether or not your method of birth control has protected you.

Fortunately, the Student Health Service (SHS) has a number of services available to help ease your mind.

## What if your method of contraception fails?

No method of birth control is perfect, but correct and consistent use of your method makes it less likely to fail. If your method fails, or you have unprotected intercourse, you can obtain emergency contraception from the SHS Pharmacy or any local pharmacy. This is a method of contraception which can be used after unprotected intercourse to reduce your chance of pregnancy. It is most effective if used within 72 hours after unprotected intercourse, but may prevent a pregnancy if used up to 120 hours (five days) after unprotected sex.

## Pregnancy Testing

Home pregnancy tests are available at the SHS Pharmacy or any drug store. If you decide you want to come into the clinic for a pregnancy test, call the SHS Appointment Line at (309) 438-2778 to schedule an appointment. You may also call the SHS Nurse Consult at (309) 438-7676 to answer any specific questions you might have.

When you come in for your appointment, the health care provider will administer the test, and then usually give you your results during your appointment. If you are not pregnant, you will be given information about birth control and contraception, postponing sex, and the SHS Women's Health Clinic.

If you are pregnant, it may be one of the most emotional moments in your life. It is a time when you may need comfort and support as well as sound information to help you sort out all the feelings and thoughts you are having, and to make decisions that are right for you. If your pregnancy test comes back positive, you will be given a packet which provides information and resources about the various options available to you at this time.

## How do I deal with emotions?

You may experience many different emotions. You may feel happiness, excitement, and joy while at other times you might feel fearful, scared, or even trapped. It may be helpful at this time to recognize conflicting emotions and allow them to occur.

During the first few days after finding out that you are pregnant you may experience denial. One of the most important things to do at this point is to allow yourself a few days for the reality of the situation to "sink in." Support from a friend, family member, your partner or another trusted person is one of the best ways to work through your feelings.

Illinois State's Student Counseling Services (438-3655) has professional staff to help you sort through feelings or lend support. Appointments are confidential and free of charge. The Student Health Service Nurse Consult at 438-RNRN (7676) is also available to answer questions and concerns regarding your pregnancy.

## **Decision Making**

Am I ready for parenthood? What are the financial obligations? How will this pregnancy affect my college experience? These are common questions that many women ask themselves after finding out they are pregnant. For some women, the most difficult part of being pregnant is not the conflicting emotions, but making a decision regarding the pregnancy.

There are several choices available and you have the right to choose the alternative that is best for you. Carrying the pregnancy to term allows you two options: raising the child yourself, or adoption. Terminating the pregnancy is a third option. These options may not be equally acceptable to any one individual; however, we want you to realize that a choice does exist. The Student Health Service can provide you with information to help you make your choice, and to help you to seek additional resources and support. Carefully consider the choices so you can comfortably reach a decision.

## **What should I do when I have made my decision?**

Visit the Student Health Insurance Office to find out how your insurance may help cover costs associated with your decision. The Insurance Office is located in Room 303 of the Student Services Building. The staff will be able to explain what services (or portions of services) will be covered by the insurance, and how much you will be responsible for paying.

If you decide to continue the pregnancy, prenatal care is strongly recommended and is included in costs associated with delivery. In addition, you may want to contact the McLean County Health Department (888-5450) or a private health care provider to make an appointment for prenatal education.