

Support for young people: How can I tell my parents I'm pregnant?

Being younger and finding out you are pregnant can be a very scary time. Telling your parent(s), "I'm pregnant" probably seems like the hardest conversation you will ever have.

Many young people fear their parents' reactions and may try to keep the pregnancy a secret. If you are pregnant, it is probably best to have your parents' love, support, assistance, and maybe even their advice. Keeping secrets can be really tough and is not generally good for your emotional health and may affect your ability to take care of yourself.

If you are working towards talking to your parents, here are some ways that might help you think about how you might want to start the conversation:

Set up the conversation. Start the conversation with your hopes and fears about how they will receive the news. Something like-

"I need to talk to you, but I am afraid that you will start screaming or be upset or disappointed" or

"I really need your support and help. Please don't be angry" or

"It's taken me a lot of courage to tell you this, so please listen before you react"

Just say it. It's usually best to get right to the point. There is no good time to tell big news, although you probably should wait for some privacy with them. If that is difficult, ask if you can speak with them in private. Just say it-

"I just took a pregnancy test and I am pregnant" or,

"I think I am pregnant" (if you don't really know) or

"I am pregnant, and I don't know how I feel about it."

If talking to them upfront is really too hard try to write a note and then talk.

Give them a chance to react. Remember when you found out that you were pregnant? You were probably shocked, upset, scared, and needed some time to deal with the news. Give your parents some time to have a reaction too.

"I know you are freaked out. Don't say anything. We can talk later."

"I can give you time for this to sink in, we can talk later"

If they do go on and on, try hard to ignore words said in shock, anger or fear. Sometimes this happens without parents thinking. Come back to them later or the next day and, say:

"I'm sorry I have upset you, but I need your help and support" or

"I'm sorry you are upset, I am upset too and I really need your understanding and support right now"

"They would be so disappointed in me." This is a common fear among young people, but it is not what parents most often say. Parents sometimes set high standards for their children but it doesn't mean that they expect their kids to be "perfect." Most parents want to protect their children and give them the best possible future they can. Don't assume you know what they would really feel, think or say.

"What was it like when...?" Ask about their experiences of any abortions, young parenting, adoption or unplanned pregnancies, or when they first had their kids.



Knowing how they felt about this is helpful to understanding them and learning what it was like for them. It may help you understand why they are responding the way they are as well as help you work out what you want to do.

Be safe. Plan ahead. If you really feel it would not be safe for you when your parents find out, consider having someone else that you trust there, like an aunt or cousin, or an older brother or sister. Pick a good time; a time when they are not likely to be interrupted.

If you feel unable/unsafe to tell your parents, consider other trusted adults in your life, e.g. school counsellor, adult siblings, friends parent, partner's parent. Youth Health services can also provide confidential support (**See list of these services below**).

If you are really envisioning the worst, make a plan where you could go to be safe. Know your options to seek support if you leave or are asked to leave the house. If you have nowhere to go and feel you are unsafe, support services such as Crisis Care (131 611) or Kids Helpline (1800 551 800) provide 24 hours phone support and may be able to assist with crisis support.

You're both "doing your jobs." Your job is to figure out who you are and what is important to you. As a parent, your mum and dad are trying to protect you and your future. That's their job. They remember when you needed them every minute of the day. And they may think you still need more supervision than you think you do. But their concern is usually coming from a good place, just a different place than yours. It can feel like a conflict but you're both doing what you are supposed to do.

Remember, though, that your task is not to do the opposite of what your parents want, or to just resist them. Your job is to be responsible for this decision. Pregnancy decisions can have very big consequences for your life, your partner's life, and your families. Think about what is the right choice most importantly for you, but also a potential child.

You don't have to know everything. You may know how you feel, but most young people, unless they are already parenting, don't have actual life experience in raising a child. This doesn't mean you wouldn't be a good parent, but it can be helpful to seek advice from your parents or other relatives and adults to learn how other people have dealt with this decision.

Youth Health Services in South Australia-

Kids Helpline 1800 551 800

Metropolitan Youth Health

Elizabeth – phone 8255 3477 (with outreach to Salisbury)

Christies Beach – phone 8326 6053

Angle Park – phone 8243 5637

Talking Realities Young Parenting Program - phone 8243 5459

SHine SA – 1300 794 584

Marion Youth at GP Plus Health Care- 7425 8200

www.cyh.com Teen Health

Online support

Reach Out- <https://au.reachout.com/>

Kids Helpline webchat <https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling>

Reference: Adapted from www.momdadimpregnant.com

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For more information

Pregnancy Advisory Centre

Central Adelaide Local Health Network

21 Belmore Terrace

Woodville Park SA 5011

Telephone: (08) 7117 8999 or Free Call 1800672 966 (country callers only)

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/AbortionSupportServices

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