



Clár Sláinte Náisiúnta do Mhná & do Naíonáin
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, Aonad 7A, Áras
Dargan, An Ceantar Theas, Baile Átha Cliath 8
T: 076 695 9991

National Women and Infants Health Programme
Health Service Executive, Unit 7A, The Dargan Building,
Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8
T: 076 695 9991

24th November 2021

Deputy Wynne,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 54999/21: To ask the Minister for Health the number of routine ante-natal appointments a woman is offered during pregnancy at present across the 19 maternity units; if there is any divergence between units; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Wynne,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

From the perspective of the Maternity Units, the booking visit is the first routine appointment that a pregnant woman will have. This usually takes place at 8-12 weeks gestation. At this appointment, the woman has a one-to-one session with a midwife with family, medical and social history taken in addition to weight, BMI and a blood sample being taken. Information on antenatal classes is given, and referrals for any non-routine appointments for specialist's services are made for example medical social work referral.

The next routine appointment that a pregnant woman will have at the maternity unit is for the dating scan. In some scenarios, depending on the gestation of the woman at presentation to the maternity Unit, the booking visit and dating scan may take place during the one appointment, in others it may be two separate appointments.

The next routine appointment at our maternity services is for the anomaly scan. As of 2021 all 19 Maternity Services are providing anomaly scans to all women booked into their services at the 20 – 22 week mark of gestation.

Hospital appointments from 28 weeks onwards will continue as needed and will check the baby's development and position; if the woman has signs of high blood pressure or other complications; the height of a woman's womb (uterus) might be measured; and the baby's heart rate might be checked. Further scanning may or may not be necessary after the anomaly scan at 20 weeks depending on the

clinical care pathway of care deemed necessary for the woman and her baby. The midwife or obstetrician will also discuss preparation for the birth with the woman.

It should also be noted that the majority of women participate in the Maternity and Infant Care Scheme thereby resulting in their care being shared between maternity units and their general practitioners, with women visiting their GPs in between their maternity unit visits in a structured and planned manner.

Details on all antenatal care appointments can be found on the HSE website at:

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/pregnancy-and-birth/pregnancy-care/care-appointments/>

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



Mary-Jo Biggs, General Manager, National Women and Infants Health Programme