

Why am I being asked if I might be pregnant before my operation, Xray or special scan?

Information for teenage girls and their parents/guardians

Paediatrics

What do we know about teenage pregnancy?

- Teenage girls under the age of 16 do get pregnant despite the age of consent being 16.
- The number of teenage pregnancies is counted by the government each year and has steadily decreased.
- But nearly 3000 under 16 year old girls were pregnant in 2016.

Why is it important for you to know if you might be pregnant?

If you are pregnant and have an operation, X-ray or special scan it can harm your unborn baby.

This is especially true at the beginning of a pregnancy when you might not realise you are pregnant.

Why are we asking to check whether you are pregnant?

We understand that most teenage girls are not having sex so they cannot be pregnant.

We know that almost 1 in 3 teenagers are having sex. But we don't know who is sexually active.

To prevent harming an unborn baby we ask everyone over the age of 12 to have a urine pregnancy test to check.

All Hospitals in the UK should check whether a woman could be pregnant before an operation, X-ray or special scan.

What if I don't want the test?

We cannot make you have the test but we would really encourage you to be tested.

If you don't want to have a pregnancy test this will be documented in your notes. And the medical staff will explain the risks of not having a pregnancy test.

In very rare circumstances, if the risks to an unborn baby are considered to be high the medical team would discuss delaying the procedure.

What if you think you might be pregnant?

It is important that you tell the nurse or doctor looking after you. This is especially true if it is very early on in a pregnancy when urine tests are less reliable.

The medical team will help you decide what to do next. And they will not tell anyone else without your permission.

Your medical team will encourage you to talk to your parents/ guardian as long as it is safe to do so.

What if the pregnancy test comes back positive

The test will be repeated and a blood test will be sent to confirm the result (occasionally the urine test can be wrong).

The medical staff will talk to you confidentially and help you.

Your Questions?

If you want anything explained ask one of the nurses or doctors they will be happy to help explain this further.

You can ask to talk to them in private.

What you discuss with the medical team will not be discussed with others without your permission. But we would encourage you to talk to your parents/ guardians or carer's (as long as it is safe to do so).

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2012). *Pre-procedure pregnancy checking in Under 16s: guidance for clinicians*. Available at: <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/pre-procedure-pregnancy-checking-under-16s-guidance-clinicians> (Accessed 12 March 2026).

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