

FACTSHEET

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Antenatal Consultation in Spina Bifida

The Spina Bifida Services within the children's hospitals network provide antenatal consultations.

Families that are pregnant with a child with a Neural Tube Disorder (NTD) such as Spina Bifida may require this service.

What is an antenatal consultation?

The aim of these consultations is to provide families with information and answer their questions about Spina Bifida.

Generally, they occur from the 18th to 22nd week of pregnancy after a referral from an obstetrician.

The consultation is provided by the Paediatric Rehabilitation (Medical) Specialist and the Social Worker.

The Medical Specialist will talk about:

- What Spina Bifida is
- How and when in the development of the foetus Spina Bifida occurs (genetic aspects).
- The likely effect on the child's overall development including:
 - Mobility
 - Toileting
 - Learning
 - Other medical issues.

The information about functional and developmental impacts is only an indicator based on an early ultrasound scan.

The social worker can advise on social and emotional aspects of raising a child with a disability. They will provide information about economic and social supports available in the community to assist with parenting. The social worker is available for supportive counselling as well.

After the consultation

A consultation can leave parents loaded with information. Some feel overwhelmed with possible details of a big life change.

Parents are encouraged to make contact with the service to clarify and ask any further questions they may have.

The service is available to support families to better understand Spina Bifida and the possible impact on their lives.

How can families access antenatal consultations?

Usually, the obstetrician or General Practitioner will have picked up some findings on the ultrasound suggestive of Spina Bifida. They will make a referral to the Spina Bifida Service for a consultation.

Further information about Spina Bifida can be found at:

There are a series of information fact sheets available for free from The Sydney Children's Hospital Network website: www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets

Watch the "Spina Bifida Animation" from the Spina Bifida Resource Network (American) at www.thesbrn.org.

Books about Spina Bifida can be found at <http://kidshealth.chw.edu.au/book-shop>.

Where to find us

In NSW all three children's hospitals have a Spina Bifida Service. The family will be referred to the Spina Bifida Service that covers their local area.

To contact the Spina Bifida Service you can call the secretary on:

- (02) 9845 2769 for The Children's Hospital at Westmead
- (02) 9382 1595 for Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick
- (02) 4925 7868 for and Kaleidoscope, Hunter Children's Health Network