

DISCUSSING PREGNANCY & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

A Guide for Healthcare Professionals
Caring for Patients with Chronic Diseases



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HCP = healthcare professional; HS = hidradenitis suppurativa; IFPA = International Federation of Psoriasis Associations; MG = myasthenia gravis; WoCBA = women of childbearing age



OVERVIEW

This guide is intended to support open discussions about reproductive health between women of childbearing age, living with chronic diseases, and their healthcare professionals.

Developed in collaboration with experts*, this guide provides helpful information and key questions for both healthcare professionals and patients to discuss how chronic disease may affect their pregnancy journey. These conversations are important to help everyone involved to prepare for the future in the best way possible.



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DISCUSSING PREGNANCY & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH WITH YOUR PATIENT



When and How?

For many women of childbearing age who are living with a chronic disease, reproductive health is often not the focus of discussions with healthcare professionals. Although pregnancy may not be an immediate priority, information shared early by healthcare professionals will help women prepare for the future, if and when they would like to have children.

This guide provides key questions and tips developed in partnership with HCPs, to support discussions with women of childbearing age. Questions may be specific to your specialty or may require further support resources or specialist support. It's important you can direct patients to additional information and guidance where needed.

Our expert panel shared that anticipating patients' questions helped them feel more prepared in consultations. The accompanying patient discussion guide provides examples of questions patients might ask.

This guide is intended for use over the course of your patient's disease, continue to revisit it to support discussions. Consultations can often feel overwhelming to patients and they don't always remember information shared. Studies have shown that the more information presented to patients, the lower the proportion that's recalled correctly.

HCPs = healthcare professionals

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Top Tips

Consider asking: 'Are you planning to get pregnant within the next 12 months?' Understanding your patients' short-term goals will give you a timeline to work with and help you decide what information is most relevant for them to understand now and what can be saved for later.

Consider asking just one key question or prompt at each stage of the patient's journey from chronic disease diagnosis through to pregnancy and birth.

Encourage your patients to take notes or record the conversation to help them revisit the shared information.

On the reverse side of this guide, you'll see how structuring new information into familiar categories and presenting it in manageable amounts can help patient recall.

If your patient appears anxious or stressed, they are less likely to remember information – consider coming back to it later.

Even if you think it's been discussed before, it can be useful to repeat conversations to make sure what's been spoken about has been understood correctly.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER DURING CONSULTATIONS

KEY

Questions to ask your patient

Questions you may be asked

Questions to signpost to Obstetrician



CONTRACEPTION

What methods of contraception are they using?

Will their medication affect contraception or impact on ability to get pregnant?



MANAGING

How might their disease control be affected by pregnancy and motherhood?

Is there any data to support the use of their medication in pregnancy and breastfeeding?

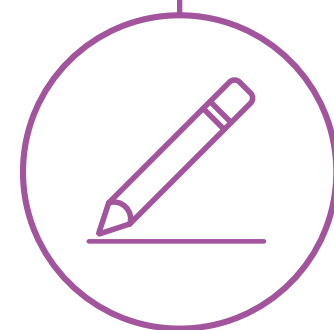
Would a change in medication be required?



BREASTFEEDING

Is there any data to support the use of their medication in breastfeeding?

Would a change in medication be required?



PLANNING

Are they planning to get pregnant within the next 12-months?

What are the risks of passing their disease onto their child?

Are there any screening tests available?



PREGNANCY & CHILDBIRTH

Who would be involved in their care?

What would their options be for childbirth?



PARENTING

How might their disease impact their ability to parent?

Is there anything extra they'd need to consider?