



Questions to ask your midwife about complementary therapies

- What is your / the hospital's attitude if I want to use complementary therapies during pregnancy / labour (eg essential oils)?
- Is there a specific medical reason why I can't use complementary therapies during my pregnancy / labour (eg diabetes, placenta praevia)?
- What is the hospital's policy if I want to be accompanied in labour by a complementary practitioner (eg homeopath, aromatherapist)?
- Are any complementary therapies available to me on the NHS during my pregnancy / labour?
- Are you able to recommend / refer me to a local complementary practitioner who specialises in caring for pregnant women (eg reflexologist, acupuncturist)?

Finding a professional who offers maternity complementary therapies

If you wish to consult an independent complementary therapist, it's important to find someone who is experienced in treating pregnant women. Don't rely on Yellow Pages – word of mouth is always a good recommendation, or ask your midwife if she can suggest someone locally. Ask about the practitioner's qualifications specifically related to pregnancy, and find out how many pregnant women they have treated. Therapists should have Criminal Records Bureau clearance (CRB check) and specific insurance to treat expectant mothers – ask to see a copy if you are unsure. Ask how much consultations will cost and how many treatments you will need for a particular condition. Ask the therapist if s/he liaises with your midwife – you may be asked to take your hospital maternity notes to your appointments. If you want to be accompanied in labour by a private therapist or doula, ask your midwife at the antenatal clinic about this. The therapist may need to produce evidence of insurance and CRB check. They may also be asked to sign an indemnity form acknowledging that your midwife retains overall responsibility for your care. Do not assume that a doula is fully qualified in the complementary therapies she uses – ask to see her certificates before signing any contract. Always inform your midwife or doctor if you're receiving complementary therapies during pregnancy or breastfeeding, or if you want to use them in labour.