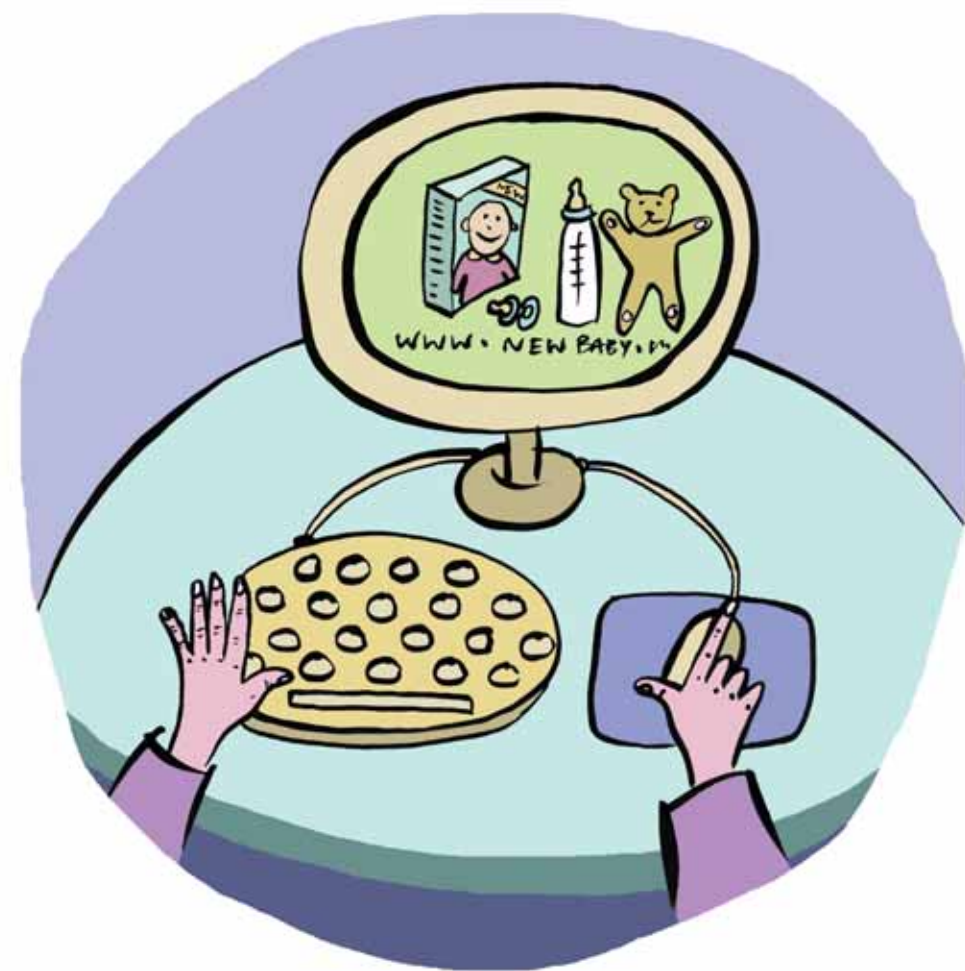


Using the internet for...

The first two years



Using the Internet for **The first two years**

by Etta Cowman and Katherine Collins, Waterford City Library.

Lifesteps offers you a range of online and printed guides. Written by staff from Irish public libraries, each guide contains easy to follow, step by step explanations of how to use the Internet to achieve a specific goal or 'life step.'

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For updates, news on the project and for a full listing of all the guides, log on to www.lifesteps.ie

You can contact the Lifesteps team at lifesteps@librarycouncil.ie

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Note: words in red appear in the glossary at the end of this module.

Introduction

Having used this guide you will be familiar with information available **online** relating to pregnancy, birth and child-rearing from birth to the age of two. It provides information on healthcare, entitlements and support groups for this stage of your life.

Parenting is one of the most challenging tasks in life and it comes without any job description or training. The aim of this guide is to make parents and future parents aware of the information and support that is available to them on the Internet and enable them to use it to their best advantage.

The net has a vast amount of information to offer parents and future parents in the areas of pregnancy, birth and the first two years.

Going online sometimes may seem very daunting as it can be difficult knowing where to start.

Many more sites than those included in this guide obviously exist, but we have tried to base our selection on the following criteria:

- Information is accurate and up to date
- You can move around the site easily and get back to where you started
- The links work
- The site is visually attractive and easy to read
- The site is reputable
- The content is serious and relevant.

We have divided the guide into two sections; **Antenatal** and **Postnatal**.

In each section we are concentrating on the following three main headings:

1. Healthcare
2. Entitlements/Requirements
3. Support

Disclaimer

Data and information in this guide is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for diagnosis or treatment by a qualified healthcare professional.

Need to Have

There are no particular requirements for this guide.

Need to Know

A working knowledge of the basics of Internet navigation is assumed. For those who lack this knowledge, the LifeSteps 'Internet Basics' guide is recommended.

Related Guides

The 'Internet Basics' guide is recommended for users who are not familiar with the Internet, [search engines](#), the browser software, etc.

Quick Guide

This section of the guide has been devised to provide a short example of what information is available on the Internet relating to:

- **Healthcare**
Antenatal and postnatal healthcare, public healthcare services, private healthcare, homebirth, breastfeeding, etc.
- **Entitlements and Requirements**
Maternity leave, maternity benefit, Maternity and Infant care scheme, health and safety issues and benefits in Ireland, childcare, child benefit, lone parent payments, etc.
- **Support**
Interactive [websites](#) where parents and parents-to-be can post advice, discuss concerns and get feedback from others in a similar situation. Breastfeeding, unplanned pregnancy, bereavement, lone parent support, etc.

When you use a search engine, bear in mind that the site which appears at the top of the first result page may not necessarily be the best or most accurate site.

Step-by-Step Guide

The main part of this guide is broken into two sections – **Antenatal** and **postnatal**. Antenatal provides information about online resources on healthcare, pregnancy, birth, requirements and entitlements and online support. Postnatal covers healthcare, requirements and entitlements, childcare and postnatal depression.

When you decide to become a parent you are making one of the most important decisions of your life.

Section One: **Antenatal**

There are many websites on the internet dealing with pregnancy and birth.

The following are some examples that you may find informative and user-friendly.

Healthcare

www.vhi.ie/topic/pregnancy

A comprehensive site which covers all aspects of healthcare.

When you access the above home page, click on the heading **More pregnancy features**. This brings you to a page containing a Pregnancy Directory, which is very informative on antenatal healthcare, getting pregnant and so on.

On the left hand side of the **homepage** a useful **link** is the Health A-Z directory.



www.homebirth.ie

This is the Irish Homebirth Association homepage. On the left hand side there is a site menu with very good information about arranging homebirths in Ireland.



www.eumom.com

This site provides medical information for pregnant women.

To fully utilise this site you will need to **register**. This procedure is explained step by step, registration is free. On the top right-hand side of the homepage you have an option to choose the country relevant to you. There is a search facility where you type in the subject on which you require information and click search.



Requirements and Entitlements

Registration of births

The birth of every child born in Ireland is required to be properly registered under Irish law. The importance of the accurate registration of a birth will become evident at several times in your child's life, e.g. school enrolment, examinations and employment, and for other administrative and legal reasons.

www.groireland.ie



This is the website of the General Register Office of Ireland. On the left-hand side of the homepage there is a very good search menu that lists all the topics on which you will find information on registering a birth, stillbirths, applying for a certificate, etc. This search facility makes this website straightforward and easy to use.

This is an example of an Irish Birth Certificate.



www.oasis.gov.ie

If you are becoming a parent through birth, adoption or fostering, to find out about your entitlements it is advisable to consult this Irish Government website.

A guide to State services in Ireland and overview of some of the issues that will concern you, this site has information on the maternity and infant care Scheme, health and safety benefits in Ireland, maternity leave, and maternity benefit etc.

There is a search facility on the right-hand side of the homepage.

www.irishhealth.com

This is another useful site with information on all aspects of health. It includes an excellent section on entitlements before and after your baby is born. There is an easy-to-use search facility on the left-hand side of the homepage.



Support Groups

www.magicmum.com

This is a discussion board for mums and mums-to-be. This is an **interactive site** with lots of messages posted each day. It provides masses of useful information and support.

To fully utilise the site it is advisable to register.



www.positiveoptions.ie

Positive Options is a directory of agencies that offer advice and counselling to women who find themselves with an unexpected pregnancy.

This site has direct links to recognised Irish organisations that offer support and advice to those who find themselves in a crisis pregnancy situation.



www.coombe.ie

Below is the website of the Coombe Hospital in Dublin.



On the left-hand side is a table of contents. Under the heading **Patient Information**, are links about miscarriage and other pregnancy/childbirth related topics.

Section Two: Postnatal

Healthcare

Having a new baby is an exciting, and tiring, experience. You will be giving your baby a lot of time and attention, but don't forget that you need a little time for yourself.

www.eumom.ie

www.eumom.ie has a very good section called **Your Post-Baby Body** dealing with how you may be feeling immediately after having your baby.

This feature is located on the left-hand side of the homepage of www.eumom.com



www.eircom.net

Logging on to www.eircom.net can access other easy to use websites containing relevant health information.

Log on to the eircom homepage, on the left-hand side of your screen is a list of topics under the heading **Channels**. Click on the **Health** topic, which is a direct link to **Bupaireland** On the left-hand side of this screen, click on **Directory**.

Click on **Women's Health**. This page is a direct link to the following relevant websites.

These sites also relate to women's health:

www.ivillagehealth.com

www.queendom.com

www.healthy.net-women.com

www.oasis.gov.ie/birth

A very good easy-to-**navigate** site which is a must to visit, is the **Information on Public Services** site www.oasis.gov.ie/birth

Click on the link **After your baby is born**.

In this section there are clickable links to the following subjects:

- Breastfeeding in Ireland
- Maternity Care and the Public Health Nurse
- Postnatal Care for Your Baby
- Vaccination for Your Baby
- Your Health After Birth

www.vhi.ie

On the homepage, under the heading **Health and Lifestyle** click on **Pregnancy advice**. ⇒ **Life Stages**, ⇒ **Baby**. The page displayed has a number of links to sections dedicated to aspects of baby health, caring for babies and adjusting to parenthood.

Entitlements and Requirements

www.oasis.gov.ie/birth

This is the online guide to your benefits and entitlements in Ireland. On the left-hand side of your screen, under the heading **Birth** there is a list of clickable links, including **Benefits and Entitlements** and **Adoption and Fostering**.

Benefits and Entitlements cover such subjects as:

- Child Benefit
- Maternity Benefit
- Maternity Leave
- One-Parent Family Payment

Adoptions Fostering covers the following topics:

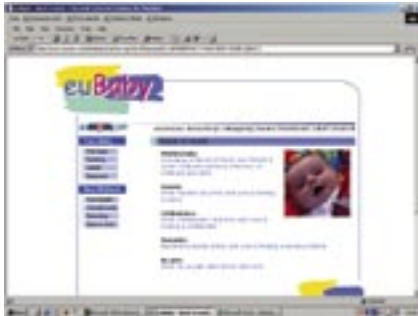
- Adoptive Benefit
- Adoptive Leave
- Fostering in Ireland

Childcare

If you intend returning to work after the birth of your baby a very important requirement for you will be **Childcare**. The following website may be helpful.

www.eumom.com

On the left-hand side of the homepage go to menu click on **eubaby** ⇒ **New mothers** ⇒ **Back to work**



www.childcare.ie

This is a self-explanatory easy to use website.



Support and Advice

There is a great deal of advice and support online dealing with postnatal and parenting queries.

www.solo.ie

This is a very informative site offering support and advice to lone parents.



www.gingerbread.ie

This site has a very useful links facility for lone parenting support.

www.lalecheleague.org

This site provides help and advice for breastfeeding mothers.

Another breastfeeding support website is that of the Association of Breastfeeding Mothers www.abm.me.uk



Postnatal Depression

For postnatal depression support and information the following websites may be helpful:

www.irishhealth.com

www.eumom.com

www.ukparents.co.uk

www.cuidiu-ict.ie

www.cuidiu-ict.ie

The Irish Childbirth Trust website has an excellent Links section covering a great deal of postnatal support groups.

Courtesy of Cuidiu-ICT



Worked Example 1: Teething

In this case we will endeavour to search for a website containing clear comprehensive information on the subject of teething. Teething is the time when your baby's first teeth start pushing their way through the gums- it can be a very painful and stressful time. Teething is something which every child and parent will experience.

Find sites that are most informative on teething.

To find sites relating to teething use search engine www.google.com



Finding an informative, easy to navigate site.

Type **teething** in the search bar and click google search.

This will bring up a number of useful sites. One such site is www.ivillage.com

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Click on this link and you will be forwarded to the following page (over).

Is this site better than other sites?

Comparisons with other similar sites show that this site is very informative as it deals with the subject of teething under various headings such as; baby tooth eruption, fever due to teething, pain with teething and everything you need to know about teething.

All of these topics are clickable links

Some other sites that deal comprehensively with teething are:

- www.drgreene.com
- www.baby-teething.co.uk

Worked Example 2: Maternity Leave

Follow the same search procedure to find information on **maternity leave in Ireland**. Using the search engine www.google.com

This time tick the **Pages from Ireland** box to get information about entitlements in Ireland.

Finding the best site

The site chosen to use for this example is www.oasis.gov.ie this is an Irish Government website. The site provides information on the social and civil rights of everyone in Ireland.

The site is straightforward and easy to use. It consists of mainly text. It deals only with the task in hand. Simply enter **Maternity Leave** in the search bar at the top right hand side of the homepage and you are automatically taken to the page with the relevant information. This page also contains useful clickable links.

One very worthwhile feature to note about www.oasis.gov.ie is that all content is available in English. Most content is available in Irish. Selected content is available in French and Romanian. The Languages Toolbar on the right of each page shows the language version of the current page and the language versions available for the page.



Glossary

- Address bar:** The long, narrow window at the top of the browser, which shows the web address (URL) of the site you are currently viewing. In Internet Explorer, the word 'Address' appears just to the left of the window. The address bar is automatically filled when you visit a web page. Alternatively, you can type in the address of a web page you wish to visit, and click the 'Go' button at the right-hand end of the window, to view that web page.
- Homepage:** The main or introductory page of a website.
- Interactive site:** A site where you can post comments, remarks, questions, and receive replies from other users.
- Link:** A link, or hyperlink, is a part of a web page that, if clicked with a mouse, opens a different web page. Links are usually shown in blue and underlined on a webpage.
- Navigate:** To move within or between websites.
- Online:** A word used as shorthand for 'on the Internet' or 'connected to the Internet'.
- Register:** To register means to create an identity online. For many services, it is important that the website knows your name, address, phone number, etc. For example, if buying a book in an online bookshop, you need to provide this information. The online bookshop then records your details in a database of customers, which it later uses to post out the book to you. Registration is usually completed by filling in an online form, with fields for name, address and other information.

Search: Searching is the process of finding a particular word or topic within a website or on the Internet. When you search, you type in one or more words which describe what you are searching for, and a search engine program looks up a database and shows a list of links to pages that may match what you are looking for. When you search, it is up to you to have some idea of what you are looking for – you have to type in the words to search for. Searches vary in scope – many websites allow you to search the site and all its pages; bigger search engines such as Google allow you to search the whole Internet. Typing CTRL-F lets you search the web page you are looking at.

Search engine: A program running on a web server computer which creates and maintains a directory of web pages on the Internet. The engine has a web page with a form; you type in words describing what you are looking for; the engine looks up its directory and sends back a list of web pages that it thinks will fit your search criteria.

Website: A website is a collection of web pages which displays information on a particular topic. Common types of websites include company websites (information about the company), online shops (where you buy goods and services and pay by credit card) and personal websites (where individuals share their interests). A website may consist of just one page of information, but will usually contain several pages, all linked together. All the pages in a website usually share the same 'domain' name. For example, all the pages in the large online shop 'Amazon' have an address (URL) that starts with 'www.amazon.com'.

Links

For a list of reading materials to supplement the online resources discussed in this guide see the online version of 'The First Two Years' at www.lifesteps.ie

Healthcare

www.vhi.ie
www.nctpregnancyandbabycare.com
www.homebirth.ie
www.eumom.ie
www.irishhealth.com
www.cuidiu-ict.ie
www.ivillagehealth.com
www.healthy.net-women.com
www.eircom.net
www.bupa.ie
www.parenthood.com
www.verybestbaby.com
www.parentalk.co.uk
www.baby2kids.ie

Entitlements/Requirements

www.groireland.ie
www.oasis.gov.ie
www.rollercoaster.ie
www.childcare.ie
www.minderfinders.ie

Support Groups

www.magicmum.com
www.positiveoptions.ie
www.cura.ie
www.ifpa.ie
www.coombe.ie
www.ukparents.co.uk
www.solo.ie
www.gingerbread.ie
www.lalecheleague.org
www.babyteething.co.uk
www.drgreene.com
www.forparentsbyparents.com
www.magicmum.com
www.positiveoptions.ie
www.cura.ie
www.ifpa.ie
www.coombe.ie
www.ukparents.co.uk
www.solo.ie
www.gingerbread.ie
www.lalecheleague.org
www.babyteething.co.uk
www.drgreene.com
www.forparentsbyparents.com