

Pregnancy Guidance

1 Introduction

- 1.1 England Hockey (EH) recognises the increasing number of women choosing to continue participating in sport throughout their pregnancy. There are many positive aspects from continuing physical activity during and after pregnancy, whether through playing, umpiring or coaching.
- 1.2 Up until 12-14 weeks gestation, the uterus is protected by the bony pelvis. Beyond this point, the uterus expands into the abdomen and becomes more vulnerable to blunt trauma. Additionally, changes in body weight, shifts in centre of gravity, and increases in hormones such as relaxin and progesterone can result in joint instability and a potential increase of injury.
- 1.3 There is a small but significant risk of harm to the foetus (and the mother) from either a fall or a blunt impact.

2 Guidance on Playing, Umpiring and Pitch Personnel (Coaching, Physio, Team Manager)

- 2.1 EH advises that players, umpires and coaches should consult with their GP or an appropriately qualified healthcare professional as soon as pregnancy is confirmed to ensure they are fit to continue participating up to 12 weeks.
- 2.2 Participation beyond 12 weeks may cause harm to the foetus due to the increased risk of blunt trauma from contact with another player, ball or stick. EH does not recommend that players, umpires or coaches participate in hockey beyond 12 weeks of pregnancy. This guidance reflects general sports medicine principles.
- 2.3 EH recognises that every individual and every pregnancy is different. If you are considering continuing to play, umpire, or coach beyond 12 weeks, you should seek personalised medical advice and consider the guidance set out below.

3 Continuing Playing, Umpiring and Coaching

- 3.1 Consult with an appropriately qualified medical practitioner to voluntarily inform them of your pregnancy and to obtain individual and specific professional medical advice regarding continued participation.



- 3.2 Regularly review with an appropriately qualified medical practitioner when considering the continuation of hockey participation.
- 3.3 Speak with your club, association or appointing body to periodically assess the risk of continued participation, whilst always looking to mitigate any such risks where possible.
- 3.4 Consider the risks to yourself and others which may come from playing, umpiring or coaching.
- 3.5 If you are an elite athlete, member of the Senior, GB Elite Development Programme, England Age Group please speak with a member of England Hockey medical staff and refer to the [UK Sport guidance](#).

4 Returning to Hockey

- 4.1 Returning to sport following childbirth is a highly individual process that should prioritise the health, recovery, and wellbeing of the individual. EH recommends a gradual and phased return to physical activity to support safe and effective recovery.
- 4.2 It is advisable for individuals to wait at least 6 weeks following vaginal delivery and 12 weeks following a caesarean delivery before resuming moderate or high-impact activities. This timeframe may vary depending on the individual's recovery and health status.
- 4.3 Before returning to any form of sport or structured training, individuals are strongly encouraged to:
 - 4.3.1 Consult an appropriately qualified medical practitioner;
 - 4.3.2 Prioritise pelvic floor and core rehabilitation exercises;
 - 4.3.3 Listen to their body, gradually increasing activity levels.
- 4.4 Please refer to the [NHS guidance](#) when returning to sport.

5 Terms

Neither EH nor any member club, association, or appointing body accepts liability for any injury, complication, miscarriage, or harm arising from participation during pregnancy. Participation is at the individual's own risk. This does not affect liability where it cannot be limited by law.

Note: The information contained within this document is for guidance purposes only. While EH makes every effort to ensure that the information provided is accurate and up to date, it should not be a substitute for specialist professional advice tailored to your situation. So far as is permitted by law, EH does not accept liability in relation to the use of any information contained in this guidance, or information on websites included or referred to in it.



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