

FAQs

SMS4dadsSA

What is SMS4dadsSA?

SMS4dadsSA is an SMS support service and a novel way to reach out to dads as they transition to parenthood.

Dads receive a series of regular text messages with tips and information which relate to their child before birth and continue until the baby is six months old. Dads also receive links to online resources and prompts to look after themselves – monitoring things like diet, exercise and social connection.

There is also a three weekly check-in text to see how Dads are travelling and if they find they're struggling, the service links them to specialist assistance.

AND IT'S FREE!

Why should expectant dads be involved?

A dad's bond with his baby is vitally important for the development of the child's brain and emotional wellbeing.

Yet often men don't receive the advice they may need to support themselves, their partner and most importantly their new baby, before or after the baby is born.

SMS4dadsSA provides support and connection for expectant dads.

"A dad's bond with his baby is vitally important for the development of the child's brain and emotional wellbeing. – SA Mental Health Commissioner Chris Burns

How does SMS4dads work?

SMS4dadsSA provides support, advice and information through their mobile phones.

Dads receive text messages three times a week when their partner is pregnant and for six months after the baby is born.

The messages are designed to help men form a deep attachment with their baby and assist them with co-parenting. The messages are designed to help men form a deep attachment with their baby and assist dads with co-parenting.

Dads are also encouraged to look after themselves and we'll check in with dads every three weeks to see how they're travelling.

The messages are delivered at times that are least likely to interfere with work and most likely to encourage conversations with a partner. Many messages arrive late in the afternoon or on weekends. They can be stored and viewed at any time.

What do the messages say?

All the messages are different and have been finessed by clinicians, academics and feedback from fathers. Many texts use the 'voice' of the baby. Some texts include links for more information and support:

- "At 20 weeks my eyelids and eyebrows are forming and I can even blink! Not much to see here but lots to look forward to."
- "Babyproofing your home now will make things less stressful when I come along. You might be too busy looking after me then dad."
- "Why don't you take me out for a walk dad? This will also give us more bonding time and give mum a chance to rest."
- "Talk to me about anything dad. Your words will help my brain development."

Who can sign up to SMS4dadsSA?

- Dads can join the service once the pregnancy is 20 weeks along and right up until the time their partner gives birth.
- Enrolment will begin in late April 2018.
- Either first-time dads, or expectant dads who already have children, can sign up. As long as you're over 18, have a smart phone and can read English texts, you're eligible.

SMS4dadsSA is a research project

SMS4dadsSA is a pilot project run by the South Australian Mental Health Commission and the University of Newcastle.

The University of Newcastle is running the pilot to see if text messaging can help new dads to cope better with becoming a father.

Every couple of months, dads will be asked to complete a survey.

At end of the research program, results will be presented at conferences and submitted to scientific journals for publication. No identifying details (including name or address) of participants will be revealed.

Parents who participate will be offered the opportunity to receive a summary of the results.

What can dads do now?

Expectant dads can register their interest in the project now at samentalhealthcommission.com.au/sms

What happens next?

Official enrolment in the program begins in late April.

How will dads know when to enrol?

We will send a regular e-newsletter to all dads-to-be who have registered their interest.

And we will send out a public call for dads to enrol.