

FACTSHEET

This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professionals to make sure this information is right for your child. If you would like to provide feedback on this fact sheet, please visit: www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets/feedback-form.

Role of the treating team in Spina Bifida: Social Work

Ante-natal Consultation

You will meet a social worker when you come for your ante-natal consultation. At these consultations you will meet with the medical specialist and the social worker so that you can learn more about spina bifida and its potential impact on your un-born child's health. This consultation gives you the chance to ask any questions that you might have

After birth

After the birth of your child, the social worker plays two main roles in supporting your child and your family. They are in relation to helping you get used to your new family life and to access social support services.

Adjustment and emotional support

Having a child with a disability can mean a lot of changes. It's normal to be worried about how these changes are going to affect you and your family. The social worker is available to provide emotional support, so that you can adjust to these changes. This can be done on both an informal basis or through formal counselling sessions.

The social worker is also available to provide support to your child as they grow older and face the ups and downs of life.

Economic and social supports

You do not need to raise your child on your own. There are many community services that are able to support your family and promote your child's development. A social worker can help you to access support and relevant services.

Some of the social supports and help for the extra costs of raising your child include local therapy services, wheelchair sports and community participation organisations, non-government disability specific support services, such as Northcott and organisations which provide payments and financial help like Centrelink.

You and your family will see different social workers when you have ward visits, clinic visits and home visits.

You can find further information at:

- Help with the cost of raising your child or applying for a Medicare card. Centrelink provides a variety of helpful services: www.humanservices.gov.au.
- Beyond Blue is a not-for-profit organisation with a wide range of information about depression and anxiety: www.beyondblue.org.au.
- Relationships Australia provides help and support to individuals and families: www.relationships.org.au.
- Spina Bifida Association have a website called tween to teen www.sbtween2teen.org. It has information aimed at teenagers with Spina Bifida.
- Northcott provide a range of services for families and individuals with disabilities. www.northcott.com.au
- Livewire is powered by Starlight and is aimed at teens with disability and illness. It provides a safe space for them to chat with others in similar situations. www.livewire.org.au