

Doppler use at home

Information for patients and carers

What is a Doppler?

It is a device used to listen to baby's heart beat during pregnancy

Who is this document intended for?

- Pregnant women and families

At home fetal dopplers are appealing to many parents to be, there are some safety concerns. The only time you should use a doppler, is when a midwife or Doctor is using it, in which case it is medically necessary. At home fetal dopplers can sometimes give you a false sense of reassurance and potentially be harmful.

If you suspect something is wrong with your baby - for example, if they're moving less, if you have unusual spotting, or if you have abdominal pains - you can't rely on an at home fetal doppler to detect whether your baby is okay. If you think something is wrong, see a doctor immediately. It's possible for the baby to have a strong heartbeat even if something is wrong.

Using a fetal doppler can also make you worry. Being unable to find the heartbeat can cause a bit of panic. But there are real reasons for this difficulty.

You might be unable to find your baby's heartbeat if:

- The device is broken. Given that some dopplers aren't approved by any regulatory body, they don't have to pass any standards and some are low quality
- You're operating it incorrectly. This is possible because they were designed to be used by trained professionals
- It's too early in the pregnancy to detect a heartbeat
- Baby has moved into a position that makes detection more difficult

If concerned with your baby's fetal movements, please call;

- Grampians Health **Ballarat** - Maternity Unit on 5320 4979 (open 24hrs a day)
- Grampians Health **Ballarat** - Maternity Outpatients on 5320 4820 (830am-5pm Mon to Fri)
- Grampians Health **Horsham** - 5381 9261 (open 24hrs a day)
- Grampians Health **Horsham** - Maternity Outpatients – 5381 9010 (8am-4.30pm Mon to Fri)

