

INFORMED CHOICE

There may be times during any health consultation when suggestions offered, do not meet ones expectations. Before acting on these suggestions you may wish to take some time to seek more information about your options. Sometimes it is family or friends who try to offer advice.

In a pregnancy, labour or postnatal situation, it may be useful to remember the following acronym, which describes five key points: **BRAIN**

B What are the **benefits** to me (my baby or family) by doing this? Remember, if it is being offered then that person obviously believes in its benefits.

R What **risks** or potential disadvantages may be involved in doing this? Sometimes the information is couched in research percentages. Eg. '5% of women will feel pain' as opposed to '95% of women experience no pain.' Sometimes the risks are downplayed or maybe the person offering the advice simply doesn't know there are disadvantages.

A Are there any **alternatives**? There will always be something else that can be offered, although it may not have the same result or effect for you. There may be other options in various modes, such as medical, naturopathy, reflexology, acupuncture, waiting, doing nothing.

I What is the **impact** of not following the advice? It is also important to be aware that with regards to medical options, these have been suggested for a reason. IT is just as important to understand any implications of not following the advice given. The implications may in fact be greater than the disadvantages.

N Does it need to be done **now**? In the vast majority of situations, the couple should have at least 5 minutes (if not days or weeks) to discuss what has been put to them and the opportunity to ask further questions if required.

Other things to consider:

- Sometimes there is little time available to try other options and sometimes with distress or tiredness, decisions can be made quickly.
- Ensure you do not feel rushed into any decision.
- There will often be options that can be tried between now and the suggested time if you are unhappy to go straight to the suggested option first.
- If you feel that the outcome(s) from certain advice that was followed wasn't what you expected, make sure you talk to the person who made the suggestion. It's important for future decision making to understand why things occurred in this instance.