

About Possums' Group Sessions 0-16 weeks and 4-12 months www.possumsonline.com

Eligibility

Once you have had an initial one-on-one consultation with either Renee Keogh or Dr Pamela Douglas from The Possums Clinic, which operates out of the Possums Education and Research Centre, for assessment and preliminary management, you are eligible to participate in as many of our group sessions as you need. If you haven't had a one-on-one or online consultation, but would like to come along, please email r.keogh@possumsonline.com to discuss this.

What is a group session or 'shared medical appointment'?

Shared Medical Appointments (SMAs) are a new way of offering high quality healthcare to you and your baby. They have been used for many years in the USA, and only recently introduced to Australia. An SMA is defined as a series of consultations that occur with a doctor so that individual needs are met, but in a supportive group environment and with the help of another Health Professional. The information that is offered to each individual is frequently of use to others in the group, who may find themselves in similar situations. Dr Pamela Douglas has pioneered SMAs for post-birth care since 2015, collaborating with researchers and SMA educators Professor Gary Egger and Associate Professor John Stevens.

Confidentiality

Mothers are asked to sign a confidentiality form on the day before going in to the group session, to agree that you will keep information shared by others in the session confidential.

Benefits

1. Affordability

Our SMA's are bulk-billed. (If you haven't yet registered your baby with Medicare, you will need to pay privately and then reclaim the rebate once the baby is registered.)

2. More time with your Possums Clinic health professionals

Each client is able to spend more time with the health professionals than is possible in a one-on-one consultation. This is important when you have a small baby, because properly dealing with the issues that arise can be quite time intensive.

3. Support from other mothers in non-judgmental environment

In an SMA you are able to hear other mothers dealing with issues that may be similar to your own and receive support. Our work at Possums is inclusive and non-judgmental. We aim to have every woman in the group feel accepted and supported regardless of how she feeds her baby, makes sense of her babies' problems, or approaches parenting.

How do the groups sessions work?

Each mother will have a chance to raise issues of concern to her and these will be addressed by the Health Professionals, with the rest of the group listening. We provide evidence-based information drawing from our programs and also from our clinical expertise. In the 2 hours or more hours that are available, we deal with the range of problems that arise in the first year of life, tailoring the content to suit your needs. Topics include hands-on help with feeding (whether breastfeeding, formula-feeding or both); sleep; preventing or sorting out cry-fuss problems; introduction to solids and your child's sensory needs. Supporting your emotional well-being is a large focus at Possums and our group sessions reflect this, with strategies for managing anxiety regularly discussed. Any issue or health problem that concerns you can be raised.

How many are in the group?

Groups are capped at 6 (or occasionally 7) mother and baby pairs to ensure all participants have a chance to be heard. A minimum of 3 mothers and babies are required for the session to proceed. We will give you 24 hrs notice if the session is cancelled.

When and where are they held? South Brisbane Sailing Club, 68 Hill End Terrace, West End 4101. Phone reception at 3177 2000 for an appointment.

Who can come?

Due to space constraints we regret to advise that only mothers and their infants are permitted into the SMAs.

Cancellation We ask that you phone us 24 hours in advance if you cannot attend, as we have waiting lists. It is ok if things go wrong on the morning and you arrive late, we understand! These appointments attract a late cancellation/ no show fee.

The evidence

Many studies have shown SMAs to be a successful way for a multi-disciplinary team to deliver high quality, affordable health care. Possums Education continues to collaborate with the researchers who have introduced SMAs to Australia, and is the leader nationally in offering SMAs in evidence-based neuroprotective developmental care ('the Possums programs'). (Other Australian SMAs offer healthcare for people with conditions such as diabetes, chronic pain, or obesity).