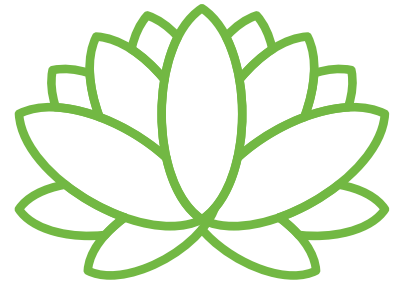


# Mental Health During and After Pregnancy

## Signs and Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety

### Did you know?

- Symptoms of **depression and anxiety can happen to anyone** during pregnancy or after the baby is born.
- About **1 in 5 women** experience symptoms of depression or anxiety **during pregnancy or after delivery**.
- About **1 in 10 men** are likely to experience symptoms **as a soon-to-be or new father**.
- **Baby Blues is also common** among women after birth. You'll feel signs of depression (sad, moody, or weepy), but they will **go away within two weeks**. Depression or anxiety are illnesses that last longer than two weeks.



### Causes

- Hormone changes in your body, during and after pregnancy
- New parenthood
- Family history
- Stress/trauma
- Having depression or anxiety before

### Signs or Symptoms

With symptoms of depression and anxiety, you might:

- Feel sad, empty, or weepy
- Feel a strong sense of fear or worry
- Feel Hopeless
- Have a loss of interest in favorite activities
- Feel tired most of the time
- Be unable to think or remember details
- Overeat or not eat at all
- Be unable to sleep or sleep too much
- Have thoughts of hurting yourself or others

Some people could also experience signs of moodiness, anger, or frustration.

### Effects

Signs or symptoms of depression and anxiety can be mild or very serious. **Symptoms can make it harder to connect with your baby** or others around you. Babies can sense when their caregiver is struggling, which may affect growth and development too.



### The Good News

Depression and anxiety can be managed and treated.



**Help is available.**

## Understanding Your Symptoms

Your home visitor or medical provider may use screening questions to check for signs of depression or anxiety. Screening questions help identify if you have little or no, some, or many symptoms of depression or anxiety.

**Understanding your symptoms can help with knowing your needs and creating a plan of care.**



### If you're having **LITTLE OR NO** symptoms:

- Stay aware of depression and anxiety signs and symptoms. Symptoms can change quickly (for women and men) during and after the pregnancy period.
- **Practice healthy habits and self-care** to support your health and well-being.



### If you're having **SOME** symptoms:

- **Track your symptoms**, especially to make sure you're not feeling worse.
- **Use healthy habits and self-care** to support your well-being.
- **Try short-term counseling or talk therapy.**



### If you're having **MANY** symptoms:

- **Get** a full **mental health assessment from a** mental or medical health **provider**. Your home visitor can provide a referral as needed.
- **Discuss** your **care options with a** mental or medical health **provider**.
- If you're having **thoughts about hurting yourself, your baby, or anyone else, it's an emergency**. Please **get help right away**.

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# Managing Signs and Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety

## What can you do?

**Healthy habits and self-care** can help **support** your emotional and physical **well-being**. Healthy habits and self-care include things like:

- Being active each day (examples: walking, stretching, dancing)
- Eating healthy
- Doing something that brings you joy everyday
- Getting enough sleep
- Asking for help when you need it
- Taking a few minutes for deep breathing, stretching, or relaxing
- Spending time with friends or family
- Keeping your medical and mental health appointments



## What else can help?



### Counseling or Talk Therapy

Talking to a mental health professional can help you understand why you feel the way you do and help you find ways to manage it.



### Medication

Your provider may give you medicine to help with depression or anxiety.



### Counseling/Talk Therapy + Medication

Some people find that taking medication while doing counseling/talk therapy works best for them.

See the next page for more information on counseling/talk therapy and medication

## Counseling or Talk Therapy:

- Is meant to be a **non-judgmental space to discuss** personal **challenges and ways to handle them**.
- You and your counselor/therapist **may talk about how you're feeling**, recent **life changes**, **past experiences**, **relationships**, or **any upsetting thoughts or worries** that are affecting you.
- **It can take time to feel better**. Talk therapy can help you learn skills that you can use to support you throughout life.
- **If the counselor/therapist** you're working with **isn't a good fit**, you can **try** working with **a different one**.



## Medication:

- **Talk to your medical provider about your options**, possible **side effects**, and **how to manage** and use them safely.
- Medication for depression or anxiety **can take several weeks to start helping**. If symptoms don't improve as discussed with your provider, the dosage or medication may need to be changed.
- It **may take a few tries to find the right medicine** and dosage that works best for you. **Keep sharing how you're feeling** so your provider can adjust as needed.



For women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, medications are usually only considered when someone has **MAJOR** depression, was already taking the medication before pregnancy, or when other treatments haven't helped.



## Resources

If you are thinking about hurting yourself or others, this is an emergency. Get help now.

**Text or call 988**

The Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

**Text or call 1-833-TLC-MAMA**

The National Maternal Mental Health Hotline

**Contact your mental health provider if you have one.**



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