

Action Plan for Depression and Anxiety Around Pregnancy

Having a baby brings a mix of emotions, including feeling sad and feeling overwhelmed. Many women experience deeper signs of depression and anxiety before and after birth. Be prepared. Watch for the signs.

If you...

- Feel like you just aren't yourself
- Have trouble managing your emotions
- Feel overwhelmed but are still able to care for yourself and your baby

You may be experiencing mood swings that happen to many pregnant women and new moms.

These feelings typically go away after a couple of weeks.

- Take special care of yourself. Get your partner to watch the baby, get a babysitter, or team up with another mom to share child care so that you can rest and exercise.
- Continue to watch for the signs of depression and anxiety in the yellow and red sections below. If things get worse, find someone to talk to. Talk to a health care provider if you feel unsure.

If you...

- Have feelings of intense anxiety that hit with no warning
- Feel foggy and have difficulty completing tasks
- Feel "robotic," like you are just going through the motions
- Have little interest in things that you used to enjoy
- Feel very anxious around the baby and your other children
- Have scary, upsetting thoughts that don't go away
- Feel guilty and feel like you are failing at motherhood

You may be experiencing postpartum depression and anxiety.

These feelings will not go away on their own.

- Get help. Contact your health care provider or visit a clinic.
- Call Postpartum Support International at **1-800-944-4PPD (4773)** to speak to a volunteer who can provide support and resources in your area.
- Talk to your partner, family, and friends about these feelings so they can help you.

If you...

- Feel hopeless and total despair
- Feel out of touch with reality (you may see or hear things that other people don't)
- Feel that you may hurt yourself or your baby

Get help now!

- Call **9-1-1** for immediate help.
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** for free and confidential emotional support—they talk about more than suicide.
- Call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Helpline at **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** for 24-hour free and confidential mental health information, treatment, and recovery services referral in English and Spanish.

Depression and Anxiety Happen. Getting Help Matters.

To learn more, visit nichd.nih.gov/MaternalMentalHealth.
To find a mental health provider in your area, call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)**.



Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute
of Child Health and Human Development

