MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS RESOURCE





PREGNANCY AND POSTPARTUM WELLBEING Frequently Asked Questions

"I'm not feeling how I thought I would. What is wrong with me?"

Every person has a different reaction to being pregnant. Although many people feel happy during pregnancy, this is not a universal feeling. Pregnancy is a time of significant change and transition. This is a time when a person's body is changing in many ways and feelings change as well. Sometimes this can be confusing and scary or even trigger a mental health disorder. As many as 1 out of every 5 people experience symptoms of anxiety or depression during this time. People who have had depression and anxiety before may experience those same symptoms again. Other people may have their first experience of depression or anxiety during pregnancy or after delivery. Don't feel discouraged—ask your doctor for help if you find you are feeling anxious or depressed.

"Is it my fault that I am feeling depressed or anxious?"

Depression and anxiety occur in response to many different things. Your genes, your upbringing, stressful situations in your life, your past, your personality, and your brain chemistry can all play a part. Depression and anxiety do not happen because you are weak, lazy, or not "trying hard enough"! They are as real as a broken leg and they won't go away because you try to "snap out of it". These problems can affect anyone, no matter if they are going through difficult times or not.

"I feel sad and anxious, what should I do?"

Anxiety and sadness are common reactions to any stressful situation. This includes the changes that occur during pregnancy and with having a new baby. Keep track of your feelings. When those feelings become overwhelming, happen every day and/or make it difficult to function, then talk to your doctor. It is especially important to seek help if those feelings happen every day for weeks or months, or make it hard to live your life.

"Is it safe for me to take medications for my depression or anxiety if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?"

There are many treatments that help people feel better. Some people help their mood by changing their lifestyle and talking to a counselor. Other people get more help from taking medications. Antidepressant medications have been extensively researched in pregnancy and breastfeeding. The findings are very reassuring about their safety for mom and baby. Most antidepressant medicines are safe and effective for depression and anxiety during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Getting better from depression and anxiety is important for both you and your baby.

You should also consider the effects of depression and anxiety that do not get better. These conditions have also been researched. They are linked to pregnancy problems and challenges to your baby's development. Medications can help many people who don't respond to other treatments so talk to your provider.

