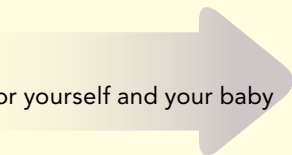


# Action Plan for Depression and Anxiety Around Pregnancy

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](https://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

