



Antenatal and Postpartum Depression

Having a baby is expected to be a happy, exciting time, yet as many as 1 in 5 women experience depression during or after pregnancy.

- Antenatal depression is when a woman has persistent symptoms of depression during pregnancy.
- Postpartum depression is when a woman has persistent symptoms of depression anytime in the first year after the birth of her baby.

Antenatal and Postpartum Depression can be very serious conditions, affecting the health of the mother, baby, and other family members.

What are the Risk Factors for Developing Maternal Depression?

- Past depression or psychiatric problems
- History of childhood abuse
- Partner conflict or family violence
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Substance abuse and smoking
- Poverty
- Lack of social support
- New immigrant
- Member of a visible minority
- Teenage pregnancy

Some women may find themselves feeling depressed even if they have none of these risk factors. Any woman can become depressed.

What Impact can Untreated Maternal Depression have on a Mom, her Baby, and her Family?

- Inadequate prenatal or postpartum care for mom and baby
- Unborn babies can be affected by the mother's stress hormones and chemicals
- Increased risk of baby being born early or too small
- Increased risk of poor bonding between baby and mother
- Breastfeeding less and for a shorter time
- Partners are 50% more likely to be depressed themselves
- Possible long-term effects on children's health and development

How is Maternal Depression Treated?

Self-Care

- Be kind to yourself
- Ask for and accept help with baby and housework
- Keep active - go for a walk
- Get enough sleep - at least 6 hours in 24 hours
- Eat healthy and eat regularly
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and drugs
- Take medications as prescribed
- Try yoga or other activities to help you relax
- Look for a support group or other supports in your community
- Talk to a health care provider

Professional Help

Includes: counseling, facilitated support groups, and medications, often used in combination. If you are currently taking prescribed medication to help your mood, do not stop without talking to your doctor.

Partners, family and friends can also help. They can ...

- Listen to her and support her feelings
- Ask her how they can help
- Encourage her to seek professional help
- Develop a relationship with the baby
- Educate themselves about maternal mental health
- Get the support they need

For help, contact:

- Your doctor, nurse, midwife or support worker
- Healthline (anytime): **Phone 811**

Think you might be depressed? Try the survey on the other side.

Think you might be depressed?

For each of the following statements, pick the response that best describes how you have been feeling in the past 7 days – not just how you're feeling today.*

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1. I have been able to laugh and see the funny side of things. | | 6. Things have been getting on top of me. |
| a) As much as I always could (0) | | a) Yes, most of the time I haven't been able to cope at all (3) |
| b) Not quite so much now (1) | | b) Yes, sometimes I haven't been coping as well as usual (2) |
| c) Definitely not so much now (2) | | c) No, most of the time I have coped quite well (1) |
| d) Not at all (3) | | d) No, I have been coping as well as ever (0) |
| 2. I have looked forward with enjoyment to things. | | 7. I have been so unhappy that I have had difficulty sleeping. |
| a) As much as I ever did (0) | | a) Yes, most of the time (3) |
| b) Rather less than I used to (1) | | b) Yes, sometimes (2) |
| c) Definitely less than I used to (2) | | c) Not very often (1) |
| d) Hardly at all (3) | | d) No, not at all (0) |
| 3. I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong. | Anxiety Subscale: (score of >4 on items 3, 4, 5 signals risk for anxiety). | 8. I have felt sad or miserable. |
| a) Yes, most of the time (3) | | a) Yes, most of the time (3) |
| b) Yes, some of the time (2) | | b) Yes, quite often (2) |
| c) Not very often (1) | | c) Not very often (1) |
| d) No, never (0) | | d) No, not at all (0) |
| 4. I have been anxious or worried for no good reason. | | 9. I have been so unhappy that I have been crying. |
| a) No, not at all (0) | | a) Yes, most of the time (3) |
| b) Hardly ever (1) | | b) Yes, quite often (2) |
| c) Yes, sometimes (2) | | c) Only occasionally (1) |
| d) Yes, very often (3) | | d) No, never (0) |
| 5. I have felt scared or panicky for no very good reason. | 10. The thought of harming myself has occurred to me. | |
| a) Yes, quite a lot (3) | a) Yes, quite often (3) | |
| b) Yes, sometimes (2) | b) Sometimes (2) | |
| c) No, not much (1) | c) Hardly ever (1) | |
| d) No, not at all (0) | d) Never (0) | |

To calculate your total score, add up the points for each question (the point value for each question is in brackets after the response). If your total score is 12 or higher, or if your answer to Question 10 is a) Yes, quite often, or b) Sometimes, don't wait – discuss your feelings with your health care provider or call the Healthline at 811.

For more information, and to download this resource, visit the following websites:

Saskatchewan Maternal Mental Health www.skmaternalmentalhealth.ca
Saskatchewan Prevention Institute www.skprevention.ca

For additional information:
Best Start Resource Centre www.lifewithnewbaby.ca

For information about medications during pregnancy or breastfeeding contact medSask 1-800-665-DRUG (3784) (Saskatchewan only), or 306-966-6378 (Saskatoon), or medsask.usask.ca.

*Cox, J. L., Holden, J. M., & Sagovsky, R. (1987). Detection of postnatal depression. Development of the 10-item Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 150, 782 - 786.