

Six Things to Know about Perinatal Depression and Anxiety



1 Perinatal depression and/or anxiety are common.

- Perinatal depression can affect any pregnant person or new parent, regardless of age, income, race, ethnicity, or education.

2 There are many possible symptoms. Each person may have a different feeling or symptom:

- Feeling sad
- Feeling overwhelmed or anxious
- Feeling guilty or inadequate
- Having mood swings – highs and lows
- Not enjoying things that used to be enjoyable
- Having different sleeping and eating habits
- Worrying excessively about your baby
- Having hallucinations – seeing or hearing things that aren't there
- Thinking of harming yourself or your baby

It is a serious emergency if you see or hear things that are not there (hallucinations). It's also a serious emergency if you have thoughts of killing yourself, or thoughts of harming yourself or your baby. If you or a loved one have these thoughts, call 911.

3 Symptoms can appear any time during pregnancy and up to a year after delivery.

Prenatal depression and/or anxiety happen during pregnancy, before the baby is born

- It is common to have some feelings like sadness and worry shortly after delivery. They can last up to a couple of weeks.
- Postpartum depression and/or anxiety happen after delivery. They can last several weeks. Without treatment, postpartum depression and/or anxiety can get worse over time.

4 Perinatal depression and/or anxiety are not your fault.

- Perinatal depression and/or anxiety are common and treatable.
- Your medical history and how your body reacts to stress or hormones can cause perinatal anxiety and/or depression.
- Friends, family, and co-workers can provide support for you and your baby. This will help you through perinatal depression and/or anxiety.

5 Getting treatment sooner is better.

- Your physical and emotional health affect your baby's health and development.
- Treatment options include therapy (talking with a trained professional) and various medicines. This includes medicine that is safe during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.
- In addition to therapy and medicine, some people find that the following can help them cope with stress: support groups, meditation, physical activity, and healthy eating. These can also help reduce symptoms of perinatal depression and/or anxiety.

6 Help is available.

- It is a serious emergency if you see or hear things that are not there (hallucinations). It's also a serious emergency if you have thoughts of killing yourself, or thoughts of harming yourself or your baby. If you or a loved one have these thoughts, call 911.
- Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.
- Start by talking with your OB/GYN, midwife, or other health care provider. They can connect you with mental health professionals to help you manage your feelings.
- See the resources below for other ways to get help.

