

TEN FACTS ABOUT DEPRESSION and ANXIETY in pregnancy and postpartum

1. You are not alone. You are not to blame. With help, you will feel better.

Anyone can become depressed or anxious during pregnancy or after the baby comes. It is not your fault. It is caused by many stresses happening at the same time. Many women develop depression or anxiety because of changes in our hormones, our feelings, our relationships, and sometimes in stress about work, housing, or money. No matter how sad or scared you feel, you can get through this with help.

2. You need regular breaks from taking care of your children and your house.

You need to get breaks to feel good about the hard work of being a mother. Taking a break will help you do a better job of being a mother, and it will help you feel better.

3. PPD does not go away fast: there is no quick fix or cure.

You WILL feel better if you keep taking steps to get help and to take care of yourself. It is hardest in the beginning, and it will get easier. Find a healthcare provider you like, people who can help you at home, and friends that listen. Don't give up.

4. You will feel better if you reach out to understanding people and say how you feel.

Women who go through depression without help are more unsure about themselves as mothers. Talking to other women who have recovered will help you a lot. It is normal to feel shy and embarrassed at first, but it will help you to talk to someone who understands.

5. You will feel worse if you judge your life on a bad day.

On a bad day, we see things negatively and feel worse by judging our lives and ourselves. Make a rule that you will not judge yourself on a hard day. Instead, fill your day with things that help you: get active, go outside, express your feelings, have a good cry, or listen to music. Do not compare yourself to other women, and try not to compare your partner, your body, your home, or your children to others.

6. You will find what works for YOU. It might be different from what works for other women.

Remember that different people need different solutions. This is true about medication, herbs, nursing, where the baby sleeps, how you teach your children, and where you get support. Be open to changing your plans so that you can find the things that work best for you and your family.

7. You will feel better if you get outside as much as you can. Even a little bit helps.

8. Recovery from Postpartum Depression or Anxiety has ups and downs.

There are good days, bad days, and boring days. If you keep to a plan of self-care, breaks, support, and remedies, you will keep feeling better. It is normal to worry if you have a bad day after you've been feeling better. Don't give up. You will get through this. When you have a bad day, think about your last few days. Did you get any time to yourself? Did you do too much? Are you angry? Is your period coming? Did the baby grow a lot or make a change in nursing? Have you been eating well?

9. Be true to yourself, and trust that you will find your way.

Your feelings or thoughts do not hurt your baby. How you act does matter. It is normal to cry and feel mad, frustrated, scared, or to feel nothing inside. But try to focus on what you are doing on the outside. Children feel good when you look in their eyes, let them know they are safe with you, hold them and smile when you can. Take breaks so that you will be more relaxed when you are with them.

10. Good mothers can get depressed.

Depression can make women feel bad and afraid about motherhood. They get afraid that they will never be happy. But that is the depression, and when it gets better, you will feel better about being a mom. Be kind to yourself. See if you can accept ALL your feelings and remember that good mothers can feel sad, scared, or bored sometimes. Depression will not last forever. Spend time with people who make you feel good about yourself and hopeful about the future. You will feel better, and you are not alone.