



# ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IN PREGNANCY

Having a baby is a life-changing event. Mood swings are common in pregnancy. Stress can occur with everyday worries and the changes you see in your body during pregnancy. Feeling nervous or sad all the time can be a sign of anxiety and/or depression. Some women will develop anxiety or depression during pregnancy while others are already being treated prior to pregnancy.

## HOW WILL I KNOW IF I HAVE ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION?

- Self-awareness is important. Talk to your provider about your overall health and any mental health issues you may have had in the past. It is best for your provider to know your full medical history in case anything will arise during your pregnancy.
- You will have screening tools given to you several times during your pregnancy. These tools are helpful in assessing your well-being and needs. This will also help your provider give you the best possible care.

## WHAT ARE THE WAYS THAT MY ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION CAN BE TREATED IN PREGNANCY?

- Many anxiety, depression and mood disorders in pregnancy can be treated.
- Talk Therapy or a referral to a psychologist or therapist may be needed. If you have a therapist or had one in the past, you may want to reach out to them.
- Other approaches such as exercise, yoga, meditation, mindfulness, talking to a friend or family member, or joining a support group can be helpful.
- Prescription medications. Always talk to your provider before you start or stop taking medications in pregnancy. Your provider will discuss your medications with you and will work with you to come up with the best treatment plan.

## WHAT IS TALK THERAPY?

- Talk Therapy is a treatment that uses talking as an approach to explore and identify causes of stress, anxiety, and depression. If you feel speaking to a psychologist or therapist would be helpful, talk with your healthcare provider and we can provide a referral for you.

## WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

- Mindfulness is a behavioral action where you can focus on being aware of what you are sensing and feeling in the moment without interruption or judgement.
- Concentrate on your breathing, be aware of your current surroundings, be gentle and nonjudgmental with yourself and release the “tension”.
- This can be practiced at any time or anywhere during the day.

## WHEN IS MEDICATION CONSIDERED?

- Medication management should be discussed with your healthcare provider to determine if this is an appropriate option for you and your baby.
- Many women take medications to treat anxiety and depression prior to getting pregnant.
- When you are pregnant, it is important to contact the office regarding the medication you are taking. You may be able to remain on your medication throughout your pregnancy.
- All medications that you are taking will be discussed with you at your initial visit. If you have any questions or concerns about your medications prior to your visit, please call the office. We are here to help.

## WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK MY PROVIDER REGARDING MEDICATION USE?

- What are the benefits of taking medication to help anxiety or depression?
- What are the risk factors for taking medications?
- How long should I take the medication prescribed for me?
- How long will it take before I will notice a change in my anxiety or depression?
- Will there be any long-term effects of taking medication?

## WHAT CAN I DO UNTIL MY APPOINTMENT WITH MY THERAPIST?

- Perinatal wellness programs, support groups and resources can be helpful.
- The National Maternal Mental Health Hotline, 833-943-5746, is available 24 hours a day/365 days a year.
- Apps such as Talkspace, Better Health and Calm may provide guidance before your appointment.

## WHEN SHOULD I CALL THE OFFICE?

- If you would like an appointment to discuss your concerns.
- If you feel your anxiety or depression is becoming worse.
- If you would like further information about resources.

**Do not be afraid to ask for help during your pregnancy.  
Remember we are here for you and your baby.**