

Boy or Girl? Do you know?

Healthy babies rock!

My doctor understands my needs

I've never been more

EXCITED

in my life!

I love my 

We have lots to be **THANKFUL** for! Support from family



up to ONE IN FIVE WOMEN

Experience depression during or after pregnancy.

a new life brought into this world by you. Excitement, Love, Happiness.

Pregnancy can be  
a time of **happiness** and **joy**.

But some women feel **sad**,  
**very anxious**, and **depressed**  
during and after pregnancy.



“When my doctor talked with me about depression, I didn’t realize I was depressed until I started to think about how I was feeling. I was surprised! Now that I have learned this about myself and chose to receive treatment, I feel so much better.”

- Danielle, 19



“When my nurse told me my depression screening test showed that I was having depression symptoms, I couldn’t believe it. After she said the word depression, I didn’t hear anything else. I had to get over the shock before I could learn more and start thinking about what I wanted to do.”

- Sarah, 36



“When I first found out I might have depression, I was all upset. I thought people would treat me like a crazy person. Lucky for me, my friend had been through this. She calmed me and my family down. Then we could all talk together about the best thing to do.”

- Nina, 23

# Pregnancy

Many women feel sad, anxious and stressed during or after pregnancy, especially if other things are going on in their lives. When you have depression, you feel this way almost every day for more than two weeks.

## FAMILY HISTORY

Women who have family members with depression may be more likely to develop depression.

## HORMONE CHANGES

Women sometimes experience depression caused by hormone changes in their body.

## STRESS/TRAUMA

Events in your life such as the death of a loved one, a difficult relationship or a serious illness can sometimes trigger depression.

## CAUSES



# Depression

Depression is an illness like diabetes or heart disease. Many women with depression also have a strong sense of fear and worry called anxiety. If untreated, this can affect your health and the health of your baby.



## YOUR • HEALTH

Depression can create health problems such as high blood pressure, body aches or pains, cramps, stomach issues or difficulty sleeping.

Depression makes it harder to keep track of things, to go to work, to make appointments and to feel close to your baby.

## EFFECTS

## Your Baby's Health

In or out of the womb, your baby can tell if you are not feeling right. This could affect your baby's growth and development.

# How do you know if you are **depressed?**

Your home visitor, doctor or other medical provider may use screening questions to see if you have any of these signs of depression. Different health providers may use different screening tools, but they all help identify signs of depression.

If you are enrolled in the Maternal Infant Health Program, your home visitor used the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS).

With the EPDS,

- Scores can range from a low score of 0 to a high score of 30.
- Your score gives a good guess about whether you have depression symptoms.
- The numbers do not confirm that you have depression—a doctor or other specialist will talk with you further and determine whether you are experiencing depression.

EPDS Score:	0-8	9-12	13-30
<b>Depression level:</b>	<b>None/Low</b>	<b>Mild</b>	<b>Moderate/Severe Depression</b>
	You likely do not have signs of depression, but that can change. Your health provider may want to ask you questions about how you are feeling again after your baby is born.	You have some signs of depression. Your home visitor or medical provider will want to talk to you more about how you are feeling.	You have many signs of depression. Your health care provider may offer you direct treatment options, refer you to a specialist for further testing, treatment or both.

	Score	Date
Write your EPDS score here:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

- sad or empty
- very anxious or strong sense of worry
- hopeless
- loss of interest in favorite activities
- tired most of the time
- unable to think or remember details
- overeating or not eating at all
- unable to sleep or sleeping too much
- thoughts of hurting myself or others



Could I be depressed?

# If I'm depressed, what do I do?

If you show signs of depression, follow these three steps:

## 1 Talk

### **...with your doctor.**

Your doctor or other medical provider will want to know how you are feeling. Your doctor may be able to help you decide on what to do next for treatment.

### **...with your home visitor.**

Your home visitor can help you learn more and offer a referral to a program to help with your specific needs.

### **...with family and friends.**

You may be surprised to learn that other family members have had depression. Sometimes talking to another woman who has suffered from depression can also be helpful.

# 2

## Learn

about depression treatments.

Not all treatments work the same for all women. Recommended treatment options vary depending on your symptoms.

Below is a quick glance at treatment options that may be suggested:

EPDS Score:	0-8	9-12	13-30
<b>Depression level:</b>	<b>None/Low</b>	<b>Mild</b>	<b>Moderate/Severe Depression</b>
<b>Treatment Options:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy Habits / Self-Care</li> <li>• Symptom Awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy Habits / Self-Care</li> <li>• Watchful Waiting</li> <li>• Talk Therapy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy Habits / Self-Care</li> <li>• Talk Therapy</li> <li>• Medication</li> <li>• Combination: Talk Therapy &amp; Medication</li> </ul>

# 3

## Act

If you have depression, you don't have to feel this way. You can get treatment. You can feel better.

Start with thinking about your own story or experiences. The questions on the next page can help you think about how you feel, how you cope, what's worked for you, past experiences and what others may think about depression.

Get an appointment to talk with your prenatal doctor, mental health or family specialist.

If you are not ready to begin treatment or are waiting for an appointment, watchful waiting and healthy habits or self-care goals may help you decide.

# Share your experience.

When considering treatment options it's important to start with your story and your experience. Answer the following questions to help guide you. Talk about your answers with your home visitor or doctor at your next visit.

How have you been feeling?	What have you been doing to cope?	What just hasn't worked?
Have you tried treatment?	Have you had any negative experiences?	What do others think - family and friends?
Have you thought about talk therapy or meds?	What is your biggest worry about depression?	How do you picture your and your baby's life?



## WHAT IS IT?

Healthy habits, or self-care, can help you cope with your feelings and compliment other treatments for depression. These include:

- Exercise
- Support groups
- Exposure to sunlight
- Meditation
- Journaling
- Spiritual life
- Healthy eating
- Doing something pleasurable every day
- Spending time with others who make you feel good
- Leaning on family and friends

## HOW LONG DOES CARE LAST?

Healthy habits can benefit for a lifetime.

## HOW WELL DOES IT WORK?

All healthy habits promote positive health, but regular exercise can be the most effective.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO FEEL BETTER?

It varies, but physical activity such as walking for at least 30 minutes a day should improve symptoms in 12 weeks.

## HOW SAFE IS IT FOR ME AND MY BABY?

Check with you doctor to make sure exercise is safe for you.

## WHERE DO I GO FOR CARE?

While you can do some on your own, your doctor, home visitor, friends and family may be able to support you with starting a healthy habit or help you get connected with a support group.

Treatment Choice:

# Watchful Waiting



## WHAT IS IT?

You wait to see if your signs of depression get better or worse in two weeks or less. Watchful waiting is not a long term treatment. You can use the chart on the next page to track any depression signs for each day.

## HOW LONG DOES CARE LAST?

Two weeks.

## HOW WELL DOES IT WORK?

About one in five women get better in the first week after screening.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO FEEL BETTER?

You should feel better in about two weeks. If not, you should consider other treatment options.

## HOW SAFE IS IT FOR ME AND MY BABY?

Watchful waiting is safe unless you have serious feelings of hurting yourself, your baby or others. You should seek immediate help and treatment if you do have these feelings.

## WHERE DO I GO FOR CARE?

Your home visitor, doctor or other health care provider can help you as needed.

## CHART YOUR SYMPTOMS.

This chart can be used to keep track of your signs of depression. For a period of two weeks, simply check the symptoms that you have throughout the day.

	Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
I feel very sad or hopeless															
I'm not enjoying life															
I blame myself for everything															
I worry about everything															
I'm afraid and I don't know why															
I feel overwhelmed and have difficulty coping															
I cry a lot															
I'm confused and distracted															
I have trouble sleeping or want to sleep all the time															
I worry about my baby															
I get angry very easily															
I have thoughts of hurting myself or others															

## CHART YOUR HABITS.

The chart below can help you be sure you're taking care of yourself. For two weeks, simply check the activities that you have performed that day.

	Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Did something pleasurable or fun															
Time with others who made me feel good															
Leaned on family, friends or spiritual life															
Got some sunlight															
Meditated															
Exercised (walking, running, stairs etc.)															
Ate healthy food															

Treatment Choice:

# Talk Therapy

## WHAT IS IT?

Talk therapy is when you talk to a health professional or therapist about how you are feeling, thinking and acting. Talk therapy helps you understand how negative feelings, thoughts, acts, relationships or difficult life events affect you. It may take a few sessions to see if your therapist is working for you or you may need to see a few different therapists to find the one you like. Not all therapists are the same.

## HOW LONG DOES CARE LAST?

Treatment is short-term, but can vary from six to 24 one-hour sessions. It depends on your needs, the program and the therapist. You may be able to participate in online therapy that lasts eight sessions (about one hour per week for eight weeks) which may also involve “homework” outside of each session or see a therapist for about an hour three to five times a month for six months.

## HOW WELL DOES IT WORK?

Talk therapy treatment has positive long lasting effects because it can help people develop lifelong skills.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO FEEL BETTER?

Eight weeks to three months.

## HOW SAFE IS IT FOR ME AND MY BABY?

It is safe—there are no known harms.

## WHERE DO I GO FOR CARE?

Call your home visitor, medical provider’s office or health plan and tell them you would like to start talk therapy.

Or call \_\_\_\_\_

# Medication



## WHAT IS IT?

Medications used to treat depression are called “antidepressants.” For a woman who is pregnant or breastfeeding, antidepressants usually are only used when she has many signs of depression, was diagnosed with major depression, has taken antidepressants before, or other treatments haven’t worked.

## HOW LONG DOES CARE LAST?

If medication makes you feel better, continue to use it for at least four to six months. If you have a repeated history of depression, you may receive maintenance treatment.

## HOW WELL DOES IT WORK?

Antidepressants have shown to help signs of depression, but not every medication works the same for everyone. You may need to try different doses, amounts or types of antidepressants. It is important to tell the health care provider how you are feeling.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO FEEL BETTER?

It may take four to eight weeks. If your symptoms don’t improve within eight weeks, your dosage or type of medication may need to be changed.

## HOW SAFE IS IT FOR ME AND MY BABY?

You should talk about the benefits and risks of taking antidepressants with your medical provider. In general, if you’re not feeling well because of signs of depression, neither is your baby. Your medical provider will monitor your baby closely.

## WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

In the first four weeks, you may experience side effects such as: headache, nervousness, restlessness, sexual problems or feeling sick to your stomach. It’s important to give the medication time to work. Antidepressants aren’t addictive, but if you miss a dose or suddenly stop taking it, you may feel symptoms such as: feeling ill like you have the flu, dizziness or vivid dreams. If you want to stop taking the antidepressant, your doctor will gradually reduce your dose over four weeks to reduce symptoms.

## WHERE DO I GO FOR CARE?

Only a medical provider can prescribe antidepressants. Your home visitor may be able to help you think of questions to ask your medical provider or help you find more information about antidepressants.

Or call \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Next steps **action plan.**

What is your biggest worry about depression?

What is most important to you about depression?

The choice(s) I would like to try to reduce depressive symptoms or treat depression:

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Habits/Self Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk Therapy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watchful Waiting         | <input type="checkbox"/> Medication   |

In the next two weeks, my goal will be:

Step One: \_\_\_\_\_

Step Two: \_\_\_\_\_

Step Three: \_\_\_\_\_

This is important to me because:

Some things that may stop me from completing my goal(s) are:

If this happens, then I will:

Key people that will help support me are:

How sure are you that you can follow this action plan?

- |                                    |                               |  |  |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very Sure | <input type="checkbox"/> Sure | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Sure | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure at All |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|

# After Birth: **Baby Blues** and **Postpartum Depression.**

Baby blues, feeling weepy and moody, affect up to 80% of women after birth. Baby blues usually go away on its own within two weeks.

Depression is different from having baby blues. Depression symptoms last longer than two weeks and usually require treatment.

Your provider or home visitor may repeat a depression screening after birth.

If you think you have depression after birth, talk to your doctor about plans for treatment. Treatment options are the same.



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

This decision aid was designed to help women learn about prenatal depression and treatment options. However, it does not include specific information about depression medications. These websites provide details about depression and medication treatment.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Effective Health Care Program. *Comparing Talk Therapy and Other Depression Treatments with Antidepressant Medicines*. <https://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/topics/major-depressive-disorder/consumer>.

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