

Anxiety and depression in pregnancy and early parenthood

Anxiety and depression are common for parents – PANDA can help you find support.

During both pregnancy and early parenthood, mental health changes can be hard to manage, and may affect your self-identity, relationships, and parenting capacity. It's common to experience anxiety and depression symptoms, or a mix of both.

Some parents experience the 'baby blues' (linked to hormone changes after birth, and usually resolves quickly). If you're experiencing mental health changes that are affecting your daily function and wellbeing during pregnancy or after birth, it's good to seek support.



Call PANDA

You can contact us any time, for any reason. We'll listen to you and help you access support.



Signs of perinatal anxiety

Mood-related

- Excessive fear and worry, often about birth, being a parent, or your baby's health
- Feeling nervous, on edge, stressed, angry.
- Racing thoughts, thinking about all the 'what if's'.
- Intrusive or obsessive thoughts

Physical changes

- Panic (racing heart, breathless, shaking)
- Easily startled, feeling scared.
- Vertigo: feeling dizzy, faint, trembly, muscle tension.
- Obsessive or compulsive behaviours (e.g. excessive checking of baby's breathing)

Relationships

- Constantly seeking reassurance from loved ones.
- Avoiding or minimising contact (baby, family and friends, healthcare providers)



If you're struggling,
reach out for help.
Finding the right support
networks will change
your life.
– Rachel

Signs of perinatal depression

- Feeling sad, low, hopeless, frequent crying.
- Focus, concentration or memory issues.
- Feeling numb, disconnected from your baby and loved ones.
- Angry, frustrated, resentful.
- Feeling worthless, ashamed, critical self-talk.
- Thoughts of self-harm, death or suicide

Physical changes

- Lacking energy or motivation.
- Constant fatigue, disrupted sleep patterns.
- Appetite changes.
- Changes to libido and desire for intimacy.
- Risk-taking behaviour (e.g. substance use, overspending).

Relationships

- Withdrawing from loved ones, relationship conflict.
- Avoidance or worry about telling your healthcare provider what's happening.
- Little or no interest in activities that usually bring joy.


Read more



PANDA Helpline

The **PANDA Helpline** provides counselling, referral and peer support from parents who have been through similar challenges.

- When someone calls, you will speak with a counsellor or peer worker who understands the challenges of being a new or expecting parent.
- PANDA counsellors and peer workers listen with kindness and compassion, help you explore support options, and can also provide information about appropriate specialist services.
- **If you are concerned for someone's safety**, it's vital that you seek immediate help by contacting either a local acute mental health service or your nearest hospital's emergency department.
- You can also contact PANDA for advice and support. If you believe that someone's life is at immediate risk, call 000.

 PANDA National Helpline 1300 726 306 | Monday - Saturday

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