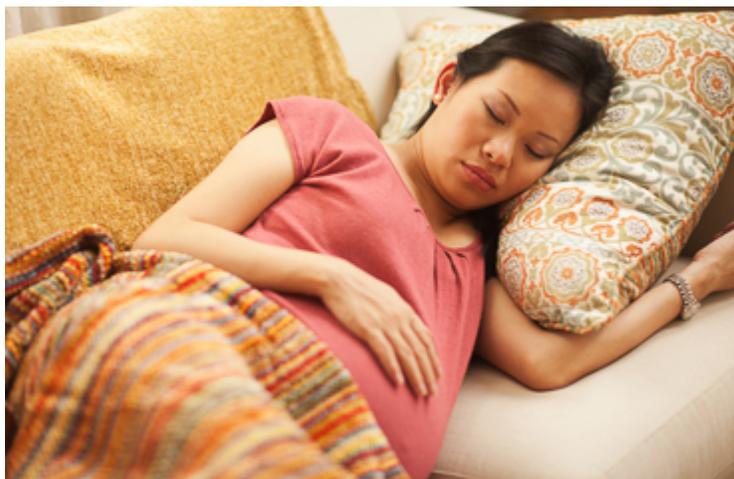


# Learning About Depression During Pregnancy



## Who is at risk for depression during pregnancy?

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If you had depression before you became pregnant, you're more likely to have it during your pregnancy. Or you may have it for the first time when you're pregnant. It may be more likely if you feel anxious about your pregnancy or if you've had problems with a pregnancy before.

No one should feel ashamed about depression. You aren't weak. And you don't have a character flaw. When you have depression, chemicals in your brain are out of balance. These chemicals are called neurotransmitters.

Managing depression is important for your own health. But it will also help you to have a healthy baby. You can treat depression with counseling, medicines, or both of these. Lifestyle changes may also help.

## How do you know if you are depressed?

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With all the changes in your life, you may not know if you are depressed. Pregnancy sometimes causes changes in how you feel that are similar to the symptoms of depression.

Symptoms of depression include:

- Feeling sad or hopeless and losing interest in daily activities. These are the most common symptoms of depression.
- Sleeping too much or not enough.
- Feeling tired. You may feel as if you have no energy.
- Eating too much or too little.
- Writing or talking about death, such as writing suicide notes or talking about guns, knives, or pills.

### **Where to get help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

If you or someone you know talks about suicide, self-harm, a mental health crisis, a substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress, get help right away. You can:

- Call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at **988**.
- Call **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**.
- Text **HOME to 741741** to access the Crisis Text Line.

Consider saving these numbers in your phone.

Go to **988lifeline.org** for more information or to chat online.

## How is depression during pregnancy treated?

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- **Counseling.** This can focus on how you feel about your pregnancy, your relationships, and changes in your life. It gives you emotional support. And it can help you solve problems and set goals. One type of counseling helps you take charge of how you think and feel. This is called cognitive behavioral therapy.
- **Antidepressant medicines.** These medicines may improve or get rid of depression symptoms. Whether you need them depends a lot on how bad your symptoms are. Talk to your doctor about whether this medicine is right for you.

You can also get regular exercise, healthy food, fresh air, and time with people who care about you. These are all important ways to prevent and treat depression and have a healthy pregnancy.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

### Where can you learn more?

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Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **F937** in the search box to learn more about "**Learning About Depression During Pregnancy**".

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