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Taking care of your mental health

During pregnancy

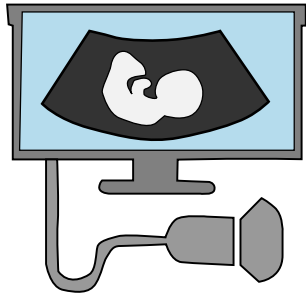
A simple guide

This resource is available
in multiple languages.
Ask your midwife for
more information.



Surrey and Sussex

Taking care of your mental health during pregnancy



Pregnancy can be a life-changing event. It may make you feel strong emotions.

This can be because of:

- Pregnancy hormones.
- Sleep changes.
- Worries about money or housing.
- Reminders of a past pregnancy loss.
- Past trauma.
- Changes in your body.
- Relationship changes.



If you are feeling very stressed or worried, you may need extra help to feel better.

There is nothing to be ashamed of. Support is available.



1 in 4 people have mental health problems during pregnancy or in the first year after giving birth. You are not alone if you are finding it hard.

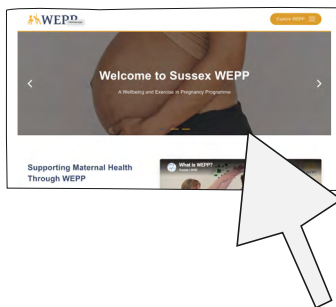
Taking care of your mental health during pregnancy

Who can help



You can talk to your midwife, health visitor or GP. They will explain the services that can help and whether there is a waiting list for them.

You may be referred to your hospital's specialist mental health midwife.



There are some things you can do to look after your mental health. These include:

- Exercising every day.
- Talking to someone you trust.
- Being realistic about what you can get done.
- Asking for practical help when you need it.
- Eating well.
- Spend time outside.

Click on the link below for more advice on wellbeing and exercise in pregnancy.

<https://wepp.org.uk/sussex>

Links for more support are on the back page.

Taking care of your mental health during pregnancy

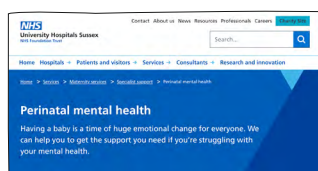
Who can help



Tommy's charity has a pregnancy wellbeing plan. It can help you think about what help you might need.

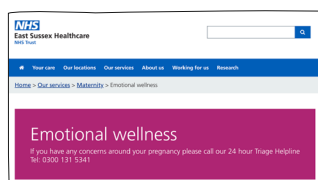
Click the link below to download the plan.

tommys.org/pregnancy-information/calculators-tools-resources/wellbeing-plan/pregnancy-and-post-birth-wellbeing-plan

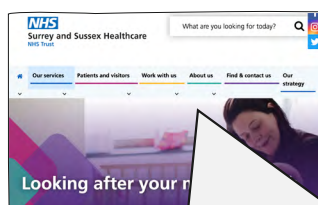


Click on the links below to find out more about support in your area.

West Sussex and Brighton & Hove: uhsussex.nhs.uk/services/maternity/specialist-support/mental-health



East Sussex: esht.nhs.uk/service/maternity/emotional-wellness



Surrey: surreyandsussex.nhs.uk/our-services/womens-services/maternity-services/your-mental-wellbeing-during-and-after-pregnancy

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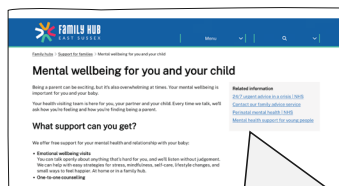
Who can help



Click on the links below for more information on health visitors in your area:

Brighton and West Sussex:

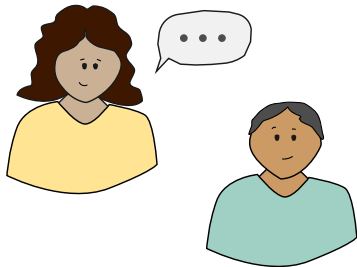
healthforunder5s.co.uk/sussex/services/specialist-support/specialist-health-visitors-perinatal-and-infant-mental-health-pnmh



East Sussex: familyhubs.eastsussex.gov.uk/families/mental-wellbeing

Taking care of your mental health during pregnancy

Who can help



NHS talking therapies can be used to help you with your mental health. They involve talking to an expert about how you are feeling.

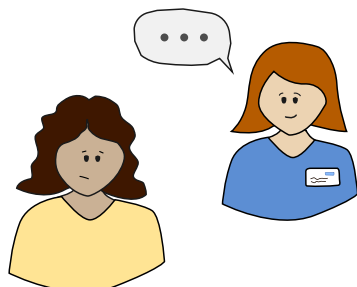
You can access support using the links below. Your GP can also refer you.

Brighton: brightonandhove wellbeing.org/talking-therapies

East Sussex: healthinmind.org.uk

West Sussex:
westsussex talkingtherapies.nhs.uk

Surrey: mindmattersnhs.co.uk



Your doctor or midwife may refer you to the Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Service for further support.

Taking care of your mental health during pregnancy

Who can help



If you need help right now you can:

- Call 111 and choose the mental health option.
- Call the Samaritans on 116 123.

In Sussex you can also:

Text the word SUSSEX to 85258.

In Surrey you can also:

Call 0800 915 4644

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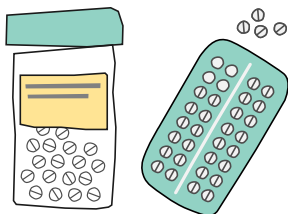
Your history



You should tell your doctor or midwife about your mental health history.

This is important even if you have been feeling well for a long time before you became pregnant.

This will help make sure a plan is in place to support you.



Keep taking your mental health medication until you speak to your doctor or midwife.

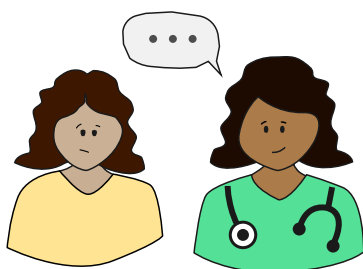
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Your history



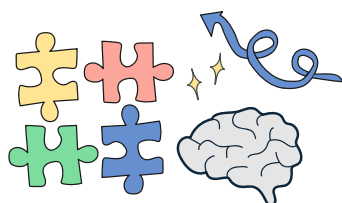
Tommy's has information about taking mental health medication during pregnancy.

Click on the link below for more information.
tommys.org/pregnancy-information/planning-a-pregnancy/planning-a-pregnancy-and-mental-illness/treatments-severe-mental-illness-during-and-after-pregnancy



If you have had mental health problems before you are more likely to need help during and after your pregnancy.

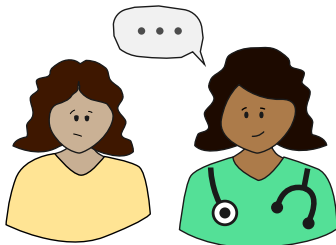
It is important to get help if your symptoms come back or get worse while you're pregnant.



You should also tell your doctor or midwife if you have any conditions like dyslexia, autism or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. This will help make sure a plan is in place to support you.

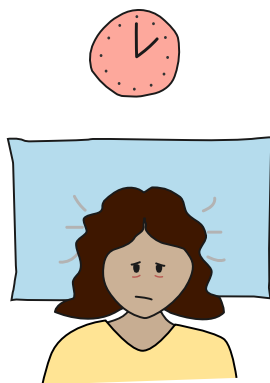
Taking care of your mental health during pregnancy

Anxiety



Pregnancy can be an anxious time.

If you are feeling anxious most of the time, you may need extra help to feel better.

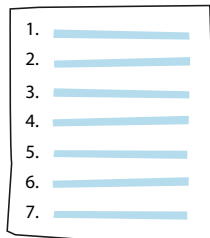


Anxiety is not a sign of weakness.
You may need help if you:

- ☐ Feel very worried about you or your baby.
- ☐ Feel unable to enjoy anything.
- ☐ Feel like something bad might happen.
- ☐ Find it hard to focus.
- ☐ Have trouble falling or staying asleep.
- ☐ Feel restless or unable to sit still.
- ☐ Feel tense or unable to relax.

Taking care of your mental health during pregnancy

Anxiety



Some women and birthing people feel afraid of giving birth. You might find it helpful to:

- Talk to your midwife.
- Make a birth plan.
- Find out more about what happens in labour.
- Find out what happens during induction of labour or a caesarean birth.
- Think about your birth choices.

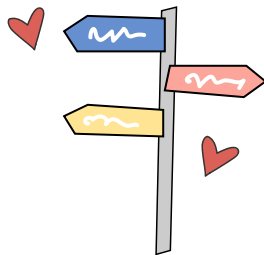
Taking care of your mental health during pregnancy

Depression in pregnancy



If you are feeling sad more than you feel happy then you may have antenatal depression.

This is when you feel sad most or all the time for weeks or months during your pregnancy.



Depression is a mental health condition.

It can get better with the right care and support.

Taking care of your mental health during pregnancy

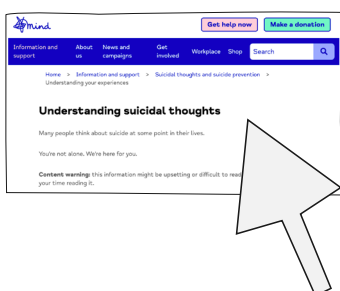
Depression in pregnancy



Signs of depression can include:

- ☐ Feeling unhappy most of the time.
- ☐ Not wanting to do things you normally enjoy.
- ☐ Not being able to make a decision.
- ☐ Feeling tearful.
- ☐ Getting angry more easily.
- ☐ Losing your confidence.
- ☐ Feeling guilty.
- ☐ Thinking about suicide or self harm.

Talk to your midwife or GP if you have any of these symptoms for more than a few weeks.



Click on the link below for more information on coping with suicidal thoughts.

mind.org.uk/information-support/suicidal-thoughts-and-suicide-prevention/understanding-your-experiences

Taking care of your mental health during pregnancy

Depression in pregnancy



If you need to speak to someone right now you can call the Samaritans on 116 123.

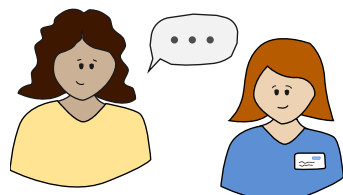
You can also call 111 and select the mental health option.

Pregnancy after IVF or baby loss



Pregnancy after fertility problems, pregnancy loss, or baby loss can feel complicated.

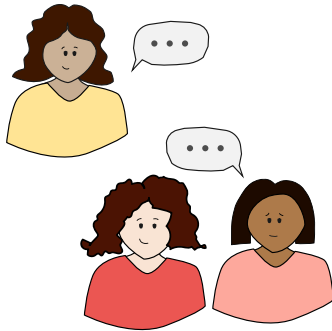
You might feel more anxious about test results and your baby's development.



Talk to your midwife or doctor about any worries you have.

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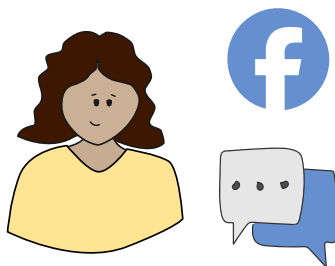
Pregnancy after IVF or baby loss



It can also help to talk to people who have been through similar things to you.

The Fertility Network runs support groups. Click on the link below for more information.

fertilitynetworkuk.org/pregnancy-and-beyond



Tommy's runs a baby loss support group on Facebook.

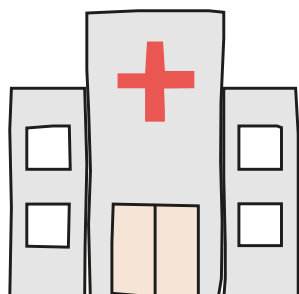
This includes support for pregnancy after a loss.

Click on the link below for more information.

facebook.com/groups/Tommysblsupport/about

Taking care of your mental health during pregnancy

Further help



Your care team is here to support your mental health during your pregnancy.

Your hospital's specialist mental health midwife may be able to support you.

You can also speak to your GP or health visitor about how you are feeling.

For further information during your pregnancy, see:

Heart & Minds Map – Find support in your area

heartsandmindspartnership.org/map

PANDAS – Mental health information and support

pandasfoundation.org.uk

Maternal Mental Health Alliance – Mental health information

maternalmentalhealthalliance.org/about-maternal-mental-health

Birth Rights – Your rights in pregnancy

birthrights.org.uk

LGBT Mummies – Support for LGBT mums

lgbtmummies.com

Taking care of your mental health during pregnancy

Support for dads and partners

Tommy's – Your partner's pregnancy

tommys.org/pregnancy-information/dads-and-partners

NHS – Dads are important too

healthforunder5s.co.uk/sussex/local-advice-and-events/advice/dads-are-important-too

Dad Matters – Support and guidance

home-start.org.uk/info-for-dads

If you do not have internet, you can ask your midwife or GP to print you a copy of any resources in this guide.

This guide has been reviewed by service users and support staff as well as lived experience champions and staff of the Maternal Mental Health Alliance.