



# Talk About Depression & Anxiety During Pregnancy & After Birth

Pregnancy and a new baby can bring a mix of emotions—excitement and joy, but also sadness, stress and feeling overwhelmed. When these feelings get in the way of your partner taking care of herself or the baby—that could be a sign that she’s dealing with deeper emotions of depression or anxiety, feelings that many pregnant women and new moms experience.

Left untreated, symptoms and suffering can worsen.

With the right care and support, however, moms can feel better. Below are some ways to help support your partner during this time.

**Be prepared. Watch for the signs. Offer help.**



## **LISTEN: Open the line of communication.**

- “I know everyone is focused on the baby, but I want to hear about you.”
- “I notice you are having trouble sleeping, even when the baby sleeps. What’s on your mind?”
- “I know a new baby is stressful, but I’m worried about you. You don’t seem like yourself. Tell me how you are feeling.”
- “I really want to know how you’re feeling, and I will listen to you.”



## **OFFER INSIGHT: Let her know that she’s not alone and you are here to help.**

- “Let’s go online and see what kind of information we can find out about this.” Visit [www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net).
- “Would you like me to make an appointment so you can talk with someone?” Support her while she calls her health care provider or contacts the Postpartum Support HelpLine: 1-800-944-4773.
- “I’m very concerned about you.” Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline together at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for free and confidential emotional support—they talk about more than suicide.



## **OFFER TO HELP: Ask her to let you help her reach out for assistance.**

- “Can I watch the baby while you get some rest or go see your friends?”
- “How can I help? I can take on more around the house like making meals, cleaning, or going grocery shopping.”
- “I am here for you no matter what. Let’s schedule some alone time together, just you and me.”

## Learn the Signs of Depression and Anxiety

You may be the first to see signs of depression and anxiety in your partner while she is pregnant and after she has the baby.

**Learn to recognize the signs and, if you do see them, urge her to talk with her health care provider.**

### **DOES SHE:**

- Seem to get extremely anxious, sad, or angry without warning?
- Seem foggy and have trouble completing tasks?
- Show little interest in things she used to enjoy?
- Seem “robotic,” like she is just going through the motions?

### **DO YOU:**

- Notice she has trouble sleeping?
- Notice she checks things and performs tasks repeatedly?
- Get concerned she cannot care for herself or the baby?
- Think she might hurt herself or the baby?

## **Depression and Anxiety Happen. *Getting Help Matters.***

To learn more about maternal mental health, visit [www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net). Also learn about Paternal Perinatal Depression by visiting [www.kdheks.gov/c-f/integration\\_toolkits/Paternal\\_PPD\\_Brochure\\_for\\_Families\\_online.pdf](http://www.kdheks.gov/c-f/integration_toolkits/Paternal_PPD_Brochure_for_Families_online.pdf).

