## Emotional Health in Pregnancy and After Birth

# Parents may have many different feelings before and after their baby arrives ranging from joy and excitement to guilt and sadness. Sometimes these feelings become so difficult that a parent can feel overwhelmed and helpless.

Having a baby is a big life change, and these feelings can happen at any time during pregnancy or within the first year after the birth or adoption of a baby.

## About one in five parents experience depression and anxiety. They may notice:

- Exhaustion
- A loss of interest in things that used to bring happiness
- Sadness, anger, loneliness
- A change in appetite
- A feeling of constant worry
- Guilt and self blame
- Difficulty remembering things or making decisions
- Thoughts of hurting themself or baby

#### Take care of yourself

- Recognize you are going through a major life change
- Ask for help
  - Talk to your health care provider
  - Talk to friends and family
- Sleep as much as you can
- Eat healthy foods
- Plan one thing to look forward to every day

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- Be active every day
- Go to a local parenting program

## If feelings last for most of the day, every day, for two weeks or more, speak to your health care provider or public health nurse.

## The causes of depression are unclear. Many hormonal and chemical changes happen during pregnancy and after having a baby. Some other factors include:

History of depression or trauma
Lack of support or isolation
Life stress

In rare instances, women can have a serious illness called psychosis. Women feel very confused and may have plans of harming themselves or their baby. It requires immediate medical treatment at a hospital emergency.

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### You are not alone. There is help, you will get better!

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