

Emotional Wellbeing in Pregnancy

Information for patients

Congratulations on your pregnancy; becoming pregnant and having a baby are exciting and life changing events. Throughout pregnancy most women experience good mental health. However, some women find it more difficult than others to cope with the changes and uncertainties that pregnancy brings.

The most commonly experienced mental health problems in pregnancy are anxiety and depression with between 10-15% of women being affected. These can be new symptoms or an exacerbation of existing symptoms.

Many women worry about how they will cope with having a baby. Common worries include:

- Adjusting to a new role (becoming a mother, stopping work)
- Changes in relationships
- Fear of childbirth
- Fear that there will be problems with the pregnancy or the baby
- Will you be a good parent?
- Lack of support and being alone

What help and support is available?

The main support is likely to be from your partner, family and friends because they are the people who know you best.

Your Midwife will ask questions about your physical and mental health and will be able to ensure that you get the care and support you need.

Your GP can talk to you about any mental health worries you have in your pregnancy and provide information, advice and treatment (including medication). He/she can also refer you for psychological therapies, if needed. Lists of talking therapies to which you can self-refer are available on the back of this leaflet.

Care from Secondary Mental Health Services

Some women may have previously experienced severe mental health problems. Pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period can be associated with the re-emergence or exacerbation of a previous psychiatric illness such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and schizo-affective disorder. Severe postnatal depression, anorexia, bulimia or an illness which received treatment from a mental health team are all indicators that a referral should be made to mental health services.

It is important to get specialist advice even if you are well in this pregnancy. Women who have had these illnesses are at a higher risk of becoming unwell after childbirth. Mental health professionals will discuss care and treatment options with you. They will help make a plan for your care with your Midwife, Obstetrician, GP, and Health Visitor. Some women may be referred to a specialist perinatal mental health service (MIMHS) that works jointly with community mental health teams. Focus will be on your individual needs and they will make a plan for your pregnancy, labour and postnatal care.

Treatments available may include medication. This is important to discuss with your GP or Psychiatrist as they will be able to give you the up to date information that you need in order to decide what is best for you and your baby. This may mean continuing with, changing or stopping medication. In order not to cause a relapse, it is very important that medication is not stopped suddenly, unless directed by a Doctor. **Psychological treatments may be suggested in conjunction with medication or in place of it.**

Ways of maintaining wellbeing in pregnancy include:

- Eating a healthy balanced diet
 - Taking time out for yourself - doing something you enjoy
 - Talking to someone you trust about how you are feeling
 - Boosting your endorphins - exercise daily
 - Asking for practical help - can family/friends cook a meal, help with childcare, shopping
 - Meeting other pregnant women at local groups/activities; ask your Midwife or Children's Centre what's on locally
 - **DON'T** use alcohol/smoking to reduce stress as these can seriously harm your baby; alcohol can lower your mood and smoking may make you feel more stressed
 - **DON'T** feel guilty that you feel low when you are expected to be happy; be kind to yourself - many women experience these feelings
-

Further information and advice can be obtained from:

NHS Talking Therapy Providers in West Kent provide counselling and support for common mental health problems such as: anxiety, low mood, low self-esteem, stress, trauma, anger as well as for problems regarding relationships, work and debt. You can self-refer to:

Ieso Digital Health

Telephone:

☎ 01954 230 066

Web:

www.iesohealth.com

Insight Healthcare

Telephone:

☎ 0300 555 5555

Web:

www.insighthealthcare.org

KMPT Primary Care Psychological Therapies

Maidstone

☎ 01622 776340

South West Kent

☎ 01892 524996

Web:

www.kmpt.nhs.uk/pcpts

Thinkaction West Kent

Telephone:

☎ 0300 012 0012

Web:

www.kcamentalhealthservices.org.uk

Pre-Postnatal Depression Support (Pandas)

Telephone:

☎ 0843 2898401

Web:

www.pandasfoundation.org.uk

Association for Post Natal Illness

Web:

☎ 0207 386 0868

www.apni.org

Health in Mind - Talking Therapies for East Sussex

Email:

spnt.healthinmind@nhs.net

NHS 111

NHS Choices online

☎ 111

www.nhs.uk

MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). We will do our best to arrange this.

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust welcomes all forms of feedback from our service users. If the standard of service you have received from the Trust does not meet your expectations, we want to hear from you. Please speak with the ward manager or the nurse in charge in the first instance, or you can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** on:

Telephone: ☎ 01622 224960 or ☎ 01892 632953

Email: mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net

or visit their office at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records. If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: www.mtw.nhs.uk or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

Issue date: April 2016
Database reference: RWF-MAT-LEA-PAT-2

Review date: April 2019
© MTW NHS Trust

Disclaimer: Printed copies of this document may not be the most recent version.
The master copy is held on Q-Pulse Document Management System
This copy – REV1.1
