

Emotional Wellbeing in Pregnancy

Information Leaflet

Congratulations on your pregnancy.

Becoming pregnant and having a baby is a life changing event. Throughout pregnancy many people experience good mental health. However, some find it more difficult than others to cope with the changes and uncertainties that pregnancy brings. Up to twenty per cent of people will experience a mental health problem in pregnancy and this leaflet explains the help that is available.

Common worries during pregnancy

Many worry about:

- How they will adjust to parenthood including their work-life balance
- Changes in their relationships with their partner or others
- Possible problems with their pregnancy or labour
- Concerns about their baby's wellbeing
- Whether they will be a good parent
- Lack of support

For many people support to deal with these worries comes from the people who know them best, such as a partner, their family and friends.

Your midwife will ask how you are feeling and discuss any worries you have about your physical or mental wellbeing. They will ensure you get the care and support you need.

You can also talk to your GP if you are worried about your mental wellbeing during pregnancy. They can provide information, advice and treatment (including medication) or refer you for talking therapies.

If you have had a severe mental health problem before:

- Pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period can be associated with the return or worsening of a previous mental health illness.
- It is important to get specialist advice even if you are well in this pregnancy. Those who have had previous mental illness are more likely to become unwell after giving birth.
- Treatments may include medication and/or the input of specialist perinatal services. Ask your GP or Psychiatrist 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. **Do not stop taking your current medication without first talking to a Doctor.**

Worries about giving birth

- Most people are concerned with how the birth will be, how they will manage and what might happen. This is perfectly normal.
 - If this is your first baby it can be difficult to try and imagine how you'll be in a situation you have never previously experienced.
 - Sometimes your previous birth may have left you feeling anxious about your next delivery.
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How to help ease your worries

- Birth education sessions offered either by the Trust or privately provide information about birth, things to help you cope with labour and the risks and benefits of medical procedures and interventions.
- Research has shown that being well informed before birth and having continuous support in labour improves the experience of birth.
- Writing a birth plan may help you feel more in control. You might like to include what your preferences would be in different situations whilst remaining flexible as no-one knows how their labour will progress.
- Please speak with your midwife if you have worries about your labour, however small, as they can be dealt with in a supportive and sensitive manner. Specialist counselling is available for people experiencing a severe fear of birth.
- For more information visit:
<https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/mental-wellbeing/specific-mental-health-conditions/tokophobia-fear-giving-birth>

Further information and advice can be obtained from:

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust Maternity Perinatal Mental Health webpage

Website: www.mtw.nhs.uk/service/maternity

NHS Talking Therapy Providers in West Kent provide counselling and support for common mental health problems.

You can contact these counselling services yourself. Let them know that you are pregnant so you can be seen sooner.

ieso Digital Health (online)

Telephone:

☎ 01954 230 066

Website:

www.iesohealth.com

Wearewithyou - Talking Therapies for Kent

Email:

www.wearewithyou.org.uk

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: November 2020

Database reference: RWF-MAT-LEA-PAT-1

Review date: November 2024

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This copy – REV2.0
