

Antidepressants and your baby



Staying mentally and emotionally well during and after your pregnancy is best for you and your baby. Some women need to take antidepressant medication during pregnancy to help them stay emotionally well.

Should I stop taking my antidepressants?

Continuing to take your antidepressant medication is very important. Stopping suddenly or without medical supervision or advice can be harmful for you and your baby.

Is it safe for my baby?

Most medications for depression and anxiety are safe in pregnancy, despite passing through your placenta. Newborns can have some withdrawal symptoms as they have been receiving a small portion of the medication through your blood, which will stop once the baby is born. We do not have enough information to say that any medication is 100% safe in pregnancy. Risks identified do not happen to all babies and any problems can be managed if they are known about in advance. We observe all babies after birth to monitor any medication withdrawal signs, with most babies having no signs of stopping the medication after 5 days.

While there are risks to mum and baby from taking medicine during pregnancy, there are also risks of not being treated and getting unwell again. There can also be risks from stopping your medications suddenly. Your medication needs and risks should be discussed with your healthcare provider. We know that babies do better with well mums.

What are the signs of withdrawal for my baby?

Your baby might:

- Cry more than usual
- Be unsettled or have trouble sleeping
- Have tremors
- Not feed well
- Have vomiting or diarrhoea
- Have a fever
- Have fast breathing or a blocked nose
- Severe signs are uncommon. If your baby has seizures or dehydration they will be cared for in the neonatal unit (nursery)

Can I breastfeed?

Yes. Breastfeeding is the best way to feed your baby and it can help ease some of your baby's symptoms. If you are worried about breastfeeding while taking antidepressants, talk with your doctor or midwife about it.

What happens after my baby is born?

If everything else is ok, you and your baby will stay together and the midwife looking after you both will check your baby regularly. This will include checking your baby's blood sugar level.

You can spend as much time as possible with your baby, feeding and caring for them. If you have any concerns, talk with your midwife or doctor. Discussions about your baby are always welcomed.

Stay close

Your connection with your baby is very important. Staying close to your baby will help you know when they need you.

Feeding

Often babies are very hungry and want to feed a lot. You will be able to breastfeed whenever your baby wants to. If you have chosen to formula feed, you can give your baby small, regular feeds.



Skin-to-skin contact can help calm your baby and help you to bond.

Comforting

Holding your baby next to your skin, cuddling, wrapping baby, talking or singing softly, massaging and generally comforting are the best ways to help your baby.

How long do I need to stay in hospital?

This depends on how things go with you and your baby. It is recommended you stay in hospital for at least 24 hours. However, if you and your baby are well, you may be able to go home if you feel confident in checking your baby for symptoms, with midwifery follow-up, or returning to hospital for a ward visit. Talk with your midwife/doctor about what is best for you and your baby.

Looking after you

It can be hard to cope with a new baby sometimes, especially if you are feeling tired and stressed. Taking care of yourself is very important for both you and your baby. Talk to your midwife, doctor or early childhood nurse about support available to help you stay emotionally well, and at any time you feel worried about yourself or your baby.

After discharge from hospital

If you have any concerns for your baby following discharge, such as symptoms or being unwell, present to your nearest Emergency Department for immediate medical assessment and care.

If symptoms aren't severe, same day follow up with GP for medical assessment is appropriate.

Support and information

Australian Breastfeeding Association

1800 686268

www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Perinatal Anxiety and Depression (PANDA) National Helpline

1300 726 306

www.panda.org.au

Tresillian

1300 272 736

www.tresillian.org.au

Beyond Blue

1300 224 636

www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/parenting

13YARN

139 276

www.13yarn.org.au

Gidget Foundation Australia

1300 851 758

www.gidgetfoundation.org.au

Get in contact with Maternity

Blue Mountains

Phone: (02) 4784 6572

Nepean

WAAU: (02) 4734 2294

Phone: (02) 4734 2311 or (02) 4734 4543

Lithgow

Phone: (02) 6350 2324

Hawkesbury

Phone: (02) 4560 5555

Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District

PO Box 63

Penrith NSW 2751

Telephone: (02) 4734 2000

Fax: (02) 4734 3737

Email: NBMLHD-mail@health.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.nsw.gov.au/health/nbmlhd

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NBMLHD

Instagram: [instagram.com/nepeanbluemountains](https://www.instagram.com/nepeanbluemountains)

Twitter: @NBMLHD

YouTube: Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District