

### Bonding with your child

Your unborn baby can hear from 16 weeks, or even earlier. Talking to your baby not only helps their hearing development, it also creates a bond between you and your baby.



There are many ways that parents can bond with their baby:

- Talking or singing together
- Reading a bedtime story
- Gently rubbing your belly
- Writing to baby in a pregnancy journal

“ There’s no way to be a perfect mother, and a million ways to be a good one. ”

- Jill Churchill -

### How to contact us

For a consultation with a KKH Women’s Mental Wellness specialist, please call our Central Appointments Hotline or email us at [Pnd@kkh.com.sg](mailto:Pnd@kkh.com.sg)

Scan QR code for the soft copy of this brochure.



#### Useful telephone number

Central Appointments

6294-4050



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## Antenatal Depression



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A woman's emotional well-being during pregnancy is as important as her physical health. Pregnancy is a stressful time, and some women may develop mood symptoms. Such symptoms can often persist into the postnatal period, where a mother with symptoms of depression or anxiety may experience difficulties adjusting to her new role or bonding with her child.

### ■ Antenatal Depression

Can look like:

- Low mood, irritability, or tearfulness
- Poor sleep
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities
- Poor appetite
- Poor concentration or forgetfulness
- Loss of energy
- Excessive self-blame or guilt
- Feeling hopeless, or that life is meaningless

If you have been having such symptoms for 2 weeks, or have difficulties carrying out your daily activities, do consider seeking help. Mothers with antenatal depression can find it hard to bond with their baby, and this can carry on into the postnatal period. Early treatment is important in such cases.

*Up to 1 in 10 women experience depression during pregnancy or after birth.*

(Source: NHS. (2022, August 4). Overview - Postnatal depression. <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/post-natal-depression/overview/>)

### ■ Antenatal Anxiety

During pregnancy, many women experience feelings of uncertainty and worry - these may be brief and resolve with time and support. However, about 10% of women may experience anxiety that significantly impacts their daily lives.

Pregnant mothers may worry about a difficult past experience, feel overwhelmed by expectations, or feel ill-equipped to handle a new baby.

Treatment is important because continued anxiety may affect the mother's health, mother-child bonding, and the child's subsequent emotional and cognitive development.

Discuss any concerns with your doctor, so that you may receive appropriate help and support.

### ■ Treatment options

#### Talk Therapy

Engaging in talk therapy can help a person to address distressing symptoms, recognise and change negative thoughts and feelings, and learn strategies to prevent depressive symptoms from coming back.

#### Medications

Depression is highly treatable and treatment can involve medication where necessary for more serious symptoms. Mothers may worry about antidepressants being safe for their babies, but there are options

available for pregnant or breastfeeding women. If you think you might need medication, please speak with your healthcare provider to weigh the risks and benefits, and to find what works best for you whilst being safe for your baby.

#### Relaxation & Self Care Strategies

Positive activities that support relaxation and reduce stress can benefit a mother's well-being as well as improve outcomes for her baby. Some of these include:

- Breathing or mindfulness exercises
- Engaging in enjoyable activities
- Writing down your feelings, or speaking to someone
- Challenging negative thoughts and finding a more balanced view
- Looking after your physical health

### ■ A helping hand

Every pregnant mother needs support as they navigate this new phase of life. Here are some ways family and friends can offer support:

- Recognise and highlight the early signs of depression
- Provide a listening ear
- Tell her how well she's doing
- Help out with daily practical tasks
- Provide information on available resources and services
- Encourage her to speak and connect with other mothers