

How Can I Manage Perinatal Anxiety?

Anxiety is the experience of excessive worry that can interfere with an individual's personal health, work, social interactions, and everyday routine life circumstances.

Anxiety is a common experience that occurs in **1 out of 5 individuals**. Anxiety can increase with birthing individuals during the perinatal and postpartum period.

Perinatal anxiety is a treatable disorder that can be managed with mindful behaviors, psychotherapy and medication management.

Ways to Manage Perinatal Anxiety



MINDFULNESS

WHAT IS IT?

Mindfulness is a behavioral action where you focus on being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

- Concentration on breathing
- Being present and aware of current surroundings
- Being gentle and nonjudgmental with self

HOW DOES IT HELP?

- Improves decision-making skills
- Decreases tension
- Clarity of thought



PSYCHOTHERAPY (TALK THERAPY)

WHAT IS IT?

Psychotherapy is a treatment model that uses talking as an approach to explore and identify causes of stress and anxiety. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a type of psychotherapy that can help manage anxiety disorders by reframing anxiety-producing thoughts. Reframing is redefining a problem as a challenge. Redefining is also a solution-oriented response to challenges that can create stress and anxiety.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

- Shift one's perspective to a more empowered position
- Be gentle and curious with yourself
- Identify what you are experiencing and ask yourself what do you need

Examples:

- I am lazy vs. I am exhausted and taking a moment to rest
- I can't do this vs. I am feeling overwhelmed and need support

HOW DOES IT HELP?

CBT teaches different ways of thinking and reframing to reduce anxiety-producing thoughts and behaviors. CBT's goal is to identify our thoughts to select helpful behavioral actions to shift thinking and behavior.



MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

WHAT IS IT?

Medication management should be discussed thoroughly with your medical provider to determine if medication is an appropriate option for you and baby.

Questions to ask your provider:

- What are the benefits of taking anti-anxiety medication during pregnancy or after I give birth?
- What are the risk factors for taking medication?
- How long will I be taking medication for?
- Are there any long-term effects of taking medication?
- How do I notice a change in anxious moods while on medication?

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

The most common classes of medications used to combat anxiety disorders are anti-anxiety and antidepressants. SSRI's are the most common prescribed anxiety medication including: sertraline (Zoloft), paroxetine (Paxil) and fluoxetine (Prozac)

HOW DOES IT HELP?

Medication management can provide additional support to managing one's anxious mood.