

PREGNANCY AND MENTAL WELLNESS

What can I do to help reduce my stress while pregnant, especially in the midst of COVID-19?

(Answers from experts)

Please refer to our hospital website as guidance frequency changes.

Q: What can I do for my physical and mental wellness during pregnancy?

A: As information about Coronavirus unfolds, there can be a wide range of thoughts, feelings and reactions.

Get the facts. Stay informed with the latest health information per the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/>. COVID-19 and pregnancy specific information may be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html>.

Keep things in perspective. Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you spend watching or listening to upsetting media coverage. Remember to take a break from watching the news and focus on the things that are positive in your life and things you have control over.

Be mindful of your assumptions about others. Someone who has a cough or a fever does not necessarily have coronavirus. Self-awareness is important in not stigmatizing others in our community.

Stay healthy. Adopting healthy hygienic habits such as frequently washing your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Avoid contact with others who are sick and stay home as much as possible.

Maintain a healthy daily routine. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Take a shower, eat healthy foods, drink plenty of water, exercise regularly, get a good night's sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs. Here are some nutrition tips to improve your perinatal mental health: <https://www.wholemamasclub.com/nutrition-perinatal-mental-health/>

1. Start your day with protein
2. Nourish your brain with fish oil
3. Don't stop taking your prenatal supplement, especially if nursing
4. Supplement with additional vitamin D
5. Don't fear fat
6. Don't skip meals
7. Avoid "naked carbs"
8. Consider making a sugar shift
9. Support your gut
10. Consider food sensitivities/allergies

Keep connected. Talk to your partner, family and/or friends about how you're feeling. Maintaining social networks can help maintain a sense of normalcy and provide valuable outlets for sharing feelings and relieving stress.

Q: I'm anxious about COVID-19, who can I talk to?

A: Know you are not alone. Staying connected with friends and family in a virtual way is important. Reach out, share your story and talk to other expecting and new moms online. Utilize free PSI Weekly Support Groups (<https://www.postpartum.net/get-help/psi-online-support-meetings/>) and/or seek additional help.

Instructions:

1. Review the [PSI Support Group calendar](#) and registration details here: <https://www.postpartum.net/get-help/psi-online-support-meetings/>.
2. If you are a new member, create an account by clicking the link at the bottom of the page
3. Join the meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone

Free Relaxation Apps

Moodfit	Whether you're experiencing anxiety, depression, or high levels of stress, Moodfit is designed to help you feel better.
MoodMission	MoodMission recommends 'missions' based on how the user is feeling and each mission can improve mood and coping skills.
Talkspace	Talkspace connects you with a licensed mental health professional so you can receive therapy from your digital devices.
Sanvello	Sanvello teaches mindfulness skills and provides mood and health tracking tools that can be used to improve mental and physical health.
Headspace	Headspace was started by Andy Puddicombe, a Buddhist monk who made it his mission to teach meditation and mindfulness to as many people as possible.
Happify	Happify provides science-based activities and games that are meant to reduce stress, build resilience, and overcome negative thoughts.

- Individuals who feel lots of worry or anxiety should talk to their obstetrician and may seek additional professional mental health support. Call your provider if stress gets in the way of daily activities for several days in a row.
- If you, or someone you care about, are flooded with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others call
 - 911
 - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. (TTY 1-800-846-8517)

Visit the [Medical City Healthcare website](#) for information about behavioral health services.