

Antidepressants and Caring for Your Baby



This handout explains possible symptoms of withdrawal in infants of mothers who take antidepressants during pregnancy. It includes tips on how to help your baby during this time.

Around 1 in 10 women take medication for depression and anxiety during pregnancy. Prioritizing your mental health needs during and after pregnancy with medication and/or other treatments will help you take care of your baby and stay well. Talk with your care team if you have any questions about your treatment plan during pregnancy.

Babies may experience withdrawal symptoms if they have been exposed to antidepressants during pregnancy. Once your infant is born, you may hear the term Poor Neonatal Adaptation Syndrome (PNAS). This is a type of withdrawal syndrome which sometimes occurs in babies of mothers who take antidepressants during pregnancy. It usually starts during the first 72 hours after birth. It can last up to 1 month, but in most cases, symptoms get better after 2 weeks.

Symptoms of neonatal withdrawal may include:

- Jitteriness / tremors
- Fussiness or more crying and restlessness
- Trouble sleeping or sleepiness
- High-pitched cry
- Poor feeding
- Vomiting and diarrhea

How to help your baby with symptoms of withdrawal:

- Stay calm
- Respond to your baby quickly before they become too upset.
- Soothe your baby with close cuddling or skin-to-skin contact.
- Keep the room as quiet and dark as you can.
- Handle your baby gently. Try not to “jiggle” them.
- A pacifier may help to settle them if they are not hungry.
- Avoid patting or touching your baby too much.
- Try gentle soothing music or humming.
- Feed your baby any time you see feeding cues. Some studies have shown that babies who drink breast milk have fewer symptoms.

If you have any questions, please talk to your healthcare team.
We are here to support you!



Scan this QR code with your phone camera for a digital copy of this handout.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Your provider:
