



Antidepressants

Emotional complications are very common during pregnancy and/or after birth. One in seven women experience depression, anxiety, or frightening thoughts during this time. It can impact your health and your baby's health. Getting help is the best thing you can do for you and your baby. Many effective support options are available and medication treatment is one of those options. Please contact your provider to discuss any questions you may have about the effect of medication treatment on you and your baby. Information about medication use during pregnancy and breastfeeding is also available at the following websites:

mothertobaby.org and womensmentalhealth.org.

How do antidepressants work?

When brain chemicals are out of balance it can cause changes in mood or behavior which may result in depression or anxiety. Antidepressants help to restore the balance of these chemicals.

When do antidepressants begin to work?

What can I expect?

It may take a few weeks to start feeling better. It is important to keep taking your medicine as your provider has instructed. When you start to feel better, don't skip or stop taking your medicine without talking to your provider.



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What else can I do to feel better?

Stay connected. Talk to people you trust, or join a support group

Get counseling. Combining counseling with medicine works better than medicine on its own. Talk to your provider.

Take care of yourself and be active. Eat a healthy diet. Any form of physical activity can help depression. Aim for at least 30 minutes of activity most days of the week.

Get enough sleep. Ask for/accept help from others during nighttime feedings.

Set realistic goals. Create small and manageable tasks for yourself.

Get involved. Participate in activities that interest you and make you feel better.

Fathers and partners may also suffer from depression or anxiety. Encourage your partner to ask for help.

Go to www.mcpapformoms.org and visit the "For Mothers and Families" tab for information on resources for emotional support.

Do antidepressants cause side effects?

Antidepressants may cause side effects, but they will often get better or go away in a few weeks. If you have side effects that continue to bother you, talk to your medical provider. You might be able to try a different dose (amount) of medicine or a different medicine.

What can I do if I have side effects?

The following chart has tips on what you can do if you have common side effects

Agitation, restlessness or anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try deep breathing exercises, meditation, mindfulness or yoga. Visit http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm for more information.• Try to get or stay active.
Constipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try adding bran or whole-grains to your diet. Add high fiber fruits and vegetables like apples, beans and broccoli.• Drink plenty of fluids.• Get regular exercise.• Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about a stool softener or fiber supplement.
Diarrhea	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try bananas, applesauce, rice, toast, plain noodles, boiled potatoes or yogurt.• Avoid spicy, high-fiber foods and high-fat foods.
Dizziness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about taking your medicine at bedtime.
Dry mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try sugarless gum or candy to keep your mouth moist.• Sip water regularly.• Suck on ice chips.• Talk to your medical provider or pharmacist about using a moisturizing spray.
Nausea or loss of appetite	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eat small, more frequent meals.• Ask your medical provider or pharmacist if you can take your medicine with food.• Drink plenty of fluids like cool water, unsweetened fruit juice or ginger-ale that lost its carbonation.
Trouble falling asleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid caffeine especially after noon.• Ask your medical provider or pharmacist about taking your medicine in the morning.• If possible, avoid napping during the day• Use your bed only for rest and sleeping• Talk to your doctor if falling asleep remains a problem

What questions should I ask my provider?

- How does this medicine work?
- How may depression and anxiety impact my baby's birth and my baby?
- How may antidepressant medication impact my baby's birth and my baby?
- What are the possible side effects?
- How long after I begin taking this medicine will I start to feel better?
- How can I get connected to counseling or a support group?

