

## SIGNS OF PERINATAL ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

### SIGNS MAY INCLUDE:

- Feeling sad, low, or crying for no obvious reason
- Persistent, generalised worry, often focused on fears for the health or wellbeing of your baby
- Being nervous, 'on edge', or panicky
- Being easily annoyed or irritated
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Difficulties sleeping, even when your baby is sleeping
- Abrupt mood swings
- Feeling constantly tired and lacking energy
- Physical symptoms like nausea, vomiting, cold sweats, lack of appetite
- Having little or no interest in the things that normally bring you joy
- Fear of being alone or with others
- Finding it difficult to focus, concentrate or remember
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Panic attacks (racing heart, palpitations, shortness of breath, shaking or feeling physically detached from your surroundings)
- Developing obsessive or compulsive behaviours
- Thoughts of death, suicide or harming your baby.

There are also many other symptoms not listed here. If you or someone close to you experiences any symptoms or feelings that worry you for two weeks or more, please seek support.

*"Do all new parents feel this terrible?"*

### ABOUT PANDA

PANDA operates Australia's only specialist National Helpline for people affected by perinatal anxiety, depression and postnatal psychosis and for those experiencing challenges in becoming a parent.

We also raise awareness about this serious and common illness so those affected can understand what's happening to them and can seek help.

*"When I was in the middle of it I felt like I'd never get better. But I did."*



PANDA National Helpline  
**1300 726 306**

Mon – Fri 9am – 7.30pm AEST/AEDT



[panda.org.au](http://panda.org.au)  
[howisdadgoing.org.au](http://howisdadgoing.org.au)



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PANDA acknowledges the traditional owners of the land where we work and pays respects to elders past, present and future.



We value diversity and are committed to providing a safe, culturally appropriate, and inclusive service for all people, regardless of their ethnicity, faith, disability, sexuality, or gender identity.

New parent or expecting a baby?  
Worried about the way you are feeling?

**PANDA can help.**  
Call about yourself or someone you know.

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Mental Health Helpline

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*“Nobody told me it could happen  
even before I had the baby!”*

## WHEN TO GET HELP

Being pregnant or becoming a new parent can be both exciting and challenging. Having some trouble adjusting to the changes is natural. However when general ups and downs develop into something more serious, and last for two weeks or more, it's time to get help.

## PERINATAL ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IS COMMON

As many as one in five expecting or new mums and one in ten expecting or new dads will experience perinatal anxiety or depression. It can occur during pregnancy (antenatal) or in the first year after birth (postnatal). The term 'perinatal' refers to both pregnancy and the first year after birth.

## POSTNATAL PSYCHOSIS

Postnatal psychosis is a rare but serious illness that affects one to two new mums in every 1000 and can put both mother and baby at risk. It almost always requires hospital admission. The symptoms often arrive suddenly and can include extreme mood swings, significant behaviour changes and loss of touch with reality.

*“I'm worried about my partner  
but she won't talk to me.”*

*“I'm the worst mum in the world.”*

## HOW PANDA CAN HELP

If you are an expecting or new parent worried about your emotional and mental wellbeing – or about someone you know – it's important to seek support. The sooner you seek support, the sooner you can start feeling better.

PANDA's National Perinatal Mental Health Helpline offers free counselling and support for all new and expecting parents.

Our highly trained and caring telephone counsellors will listen to your concerns and help you take the first steps to recovery.

## ONLINE SUPPORT

You can find essential information and resources, including for family and friends, on PANDA's websites [panda.org.au](http://panda.org.au) and [howisdadgoing.org.au](http://howisdadgoing.org.au)

You can also fill out PANDA's Mental Health Checklist for Expecting and New Parents if you are worried about the way you are feeling and unsure if you should seek help.

*“If I tell anyone how I'm feeling  
they'll think I'm a bad parent.”*

## IT'S BEST TO TALK ABOUT IT

Perinatal anxiety and depression is a serious health condition. It can affect any new or expecting parent. It is nothing to be ashamed of. It is fine to talk about it. In fact, it is better that you do!

Telling others about your struggles, or admitting you need help is not a sign of weakness. It shows that you want the best for yourself and your family.

*“I thought I'd love my baby  
instantly, but I can hardly  
bear to look at her.”*



**Call our free National Perinatal Mental Health Helpline**

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