

If you have any concerns about your baby please speak to your midwife or GP.

How to support your baby after birth

To support your baby during this time we recommend the following for the first week after birth:

- Have lots of skin-to-skin contact with your baby
- Try to avoid too many people handling your baby
- Create a calm, quiet and dark environment
- Try to avoid a lot of stimulation for your baby

Further information

Best use of medicines in pregnancy (BUMPS):

<https://www.medicinesinpregnancy.org>

Drugs and Lactation Database - Lactmed:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK501922/>

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Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

Email ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656 or 826319

Depression and medication in pregnancy

Information for pregnant women





Many women have symptoms of depression in pregnancy or after birth and take a type of antidepressant medication called Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) such as Citalopram, Fluoxetine and Sertraline.

As a mother, one of the most important things for you and your baby's health and wellbeing is that you are healthy, and in the best possible state of mind.

We would not recommend that you suddenly stop taking medication during or after your pregnancy unless advised otherwise by a doctor.

What is the effect on my baby during pregnancy?

It is still unclear if antidepressant medication increases the risk of birth defects or malformations however the risk is very low. We do know however, that there are long term benefits on a child's emotional and behavioural development when their mother's mental health has been stable in pregnancy.

How will taking medication affect my baby after birth?

There is a slightly increased risk of a rare disorder called Persistent Pulmonary Hypertension of the Newborn (PPHN). This is a condition where there is a delay in the normal circulatory changes after birth; however the risk still remains very low.

Some babies may have breathing difficulties immediately after birth for which they may need extra support.

About one third of babies may experience some form of 'withdrawal' symptoms from SSRIs. These symptoms may include irritability, poor feeding and jitteriness/tremors. Symptoms can

present at any time over the first week of life, but usually resolve within a few days and do not require any intervention.

What are the alternatives to medication?

Each woman's situation is individual. You may feel that medication is not right for you. Your Community Midwife can signpost you to other services.

There is good evidence that self-help methods such as exercise, a good sleep pattern and mindfulness, can help to reduce anxiety and improve mood.

Can I still breastfeed?

Most medications taken by mothers will pass into their breast milk in small quantities; however, there are significant benefits of breastmilk for your baby. For antidepressants, including SSRIs, the amounts that pass into the milk are very small and there is no evidence that this has any effect on the baby.

If you are taking multiple medications we recommend that you have a discussion with a doctor or pharmacist regarding breastfeeding.

What will happen to my baby after birth?

- The midwives and doctors looking after your baby will be aware of the possible effects of antidepressants and will discuss any concerns with you
- Provided you and your baby are well, you will not normally need to stay in hospital for any longer than usual because of antidepressant use in pregnancy.