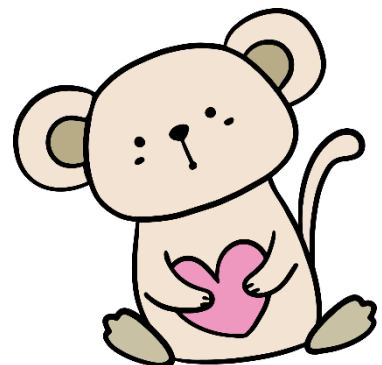




NORNET
northern neonatal network

**CARING FOR YOUR BABY
WHILST YOU ARE ON
ANTI-DEPRESSANTS**



Caring for your baby whilst you are on anti-depressants

Around one in 10 women need to be treated for issues relating to their mental health during pregnancy, including depression. It is important that depression continues to be managed with medication (anti-depressants) or psychological treatments during pregnancy and after birth, to ensure you stay well to care for your baby.

This leaflet is specifically for women who have been treated with medicines to treat depression or anxiety in their pregnancy. These medicines are known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), selective noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs) or antidepressants and includes medicines such as fluoxetine, sertraline, citalopram and venlafaxine and mirtazapine. If you are unsure about your medicine please discuss this with your midwife.

Can my anti-depressants affect my baby?

There are many studies that have looked into this question and the information provided to you in this leaflet is based on the best evidence available. There have been concerns that anti-depressants in pregnancy may cause heart or lung problems in your baby. The latest evidence shows that these risks are extremely low. We do know that there are long term benefits on a child's emotional and behavioural development when their mother's mental health has been stable during pregnancy.



Your baby will always have a new-born check done prior to discharge which includes screening for heart and lung problems whether you are taking medication, or not.

What is Neonatal Adaptation Syndrome?

Some babies experience mild symptoms of what is called Neonatal Adaptation Syndrome. Around 1 in 3 babies born to mothers on anti-depressants during pregnancy experience this. The symptoms include: difficulties with feeding and sleeping; restlessness; and jitteriness. Babies who develop these symptoms usually do so within 72 hours of birth. These symptoms may last up to two weeks.

These symptoms are mild and do not require treatment with medicines. They can be managed by simple measures like holding, cuddling and feeding your baby frequently.

These symptoms may sometimes be confused with signs that suggest your baby is unwell. It is important to discuss these symptoms with your midwife/Health visitor/GP and seek medical attention if they do not resolve.

Can I breastfeed my baby whilst on anti-depressants?

Most anti-depressants taken by mothers will pass into their breast milk in small quantities, but there is no evidence that this may affect your baby. Breastfeeding whilst on antidepressants is safe, and there are significant benefits of breastmilk for your baby. It is important to discuss what medication you are taking with your midwife during your pregnancy in order to have a clear plan in place for the delivery.



What to expect after delivery?

Unless your baby needs admission to a neonatal unit or special care baby unit, you and your baby will be cared for in the post-natal ward. Since the symptoms of neonatal adaptation syndrome are mild, your baby will not need any additional monitoring or observations whilst in the post-natal ward. If you and your baby are well, you will not normally need to stay in hospital for any longer than usual.

What to expect after discharge home?

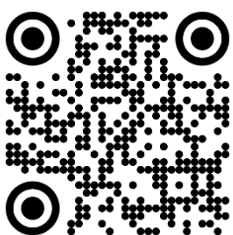
It is important for you to seek healthcare advice for yourself if you are feeling low or unwell.

Your baby may cry and want to be cuddled and fed more. It may sometimes be difficult to settle your baby, even after feeds. The following simple measures may help to settle your baby:

- Lots of skin-to-skin contact and cuddles
- Avoid too many people handling your baby
- Keep the room quiet and calm
- A pacifier/dummy may help to settle your baby when they are not hungry
- Humming or singing gently to your baby may help
- Avoid a lot of stimulation, such as bright lights, loud noises and strong smells around your baby
- Avoid smoking around your baby



Never worry about asking for help or advice. Health care professionals are always happy to offer you support and advice when you need it.



You can find more information for parents and families on our website. This can be found using the QR Code

