

Do I Have Perinatal Anxiety?

Perinatal anxiety is stress and worry that is experienced during pregnancy and up to one year after giving birth. Perinatal anxiety appears differently for each person. Person(s) experiencing perinatal anxiety have a wide range of symptoms.

Common Symptoms Include

SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS



Having little or no interest in normal things that bring joy like time with friends, exercise, eating, or partner time



Losing interest in intimacy



Withdrawing from friends and family



Being easily annoyed or irritated



Engaging in risk-taking behavior, for example unsafe alcohol or other substance use

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS



Panic attacks, which might cause a fast heartbeat, palpitations, shortness of breath, shaking or feeling physically 'detached' from your surroundings



Feeling constantly tired and lacking energy



Sleeping too much or not sleeping very well at all

PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS



Persistent, generalized worry, often focused on fears for the health or wellbeing of the baby



The development of obsessive or compulsive behaviors



Abrupt mood swings



Being nervous, 'on edge', or panicky



Feeling constantly sad, low, or crying for no obvious reason



Finding it difficult to focus, concentrate or remember which some might call "brain fog"



Having thoughts of death or suicide, or self-harm

Why Am I Feeling This Way?

Perinatal anxiety can be a result of questioning and concern about caring for a newborn baby, lack of experience, social and environmental factors, prevalence of race-based, gender based, aged based, and disability-based traumas, as well as hormonal and biochemical imbalances.

It can be particularly difficult to share these thoughts and feelings and ask for help. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, or others that are affecting your emotional or mental health to the point of not being able to function day to day, please seek support: postpartum.net/get-help/psi-helpline/