

# Emotions: how you and your partner may be feeling

There's no 'normal' way to feel while you're pregnant, and everyone is different.

## Pregnancy is an emotional time

You may not have planned the pregnancy and, especially if you're on your own, may wonder how you'll cope. Even if you were desperate to have a baby, now you're actually expecting one you can feel worried, apprehensive and downright scared.

Then again, you may find that you're overjoyed a lot of the time and can't help smiling, even when you're suffering with morning sickness!

Even if you're not the sort of person who cries a lot, that can change in pregnancy. Possibly the slightest thing will set you off, ranging from a sad

report on the news to, believe it or not, the most ordinary scene in your favourite soap.

Pregnancy can be stressful. Talking about how you feel with your husband, partner, friends or family members can help you feel positive and cope with stress.

Some women find they get really irritable, tense and moody – which can be difficult for those closest to them. Relaxation exercises are one way to manage stress. For tips for looking after your wellbeing see [www.stepsforstress.org](http://www.stepsforstress.org)

In the same way you will have some physical checks, you will also have some mental health checks. These might be conversations or questionnaires about how you are doing. Everyone has these checks and they are a way of looking after your mental health during pregnancy and after your baby is born.



## Depression and anxiety in pregnancy

More than 10% of pregnant women will experience either depression or anxiety while pregnant and some women will experience symptoms of both. Those who have suffered from these before can be at particular risk.

However you're feeling, there's no need to suffer in silence. Talk to your midwife who will be able to suggest ways you can feel better.


It's a good idea to share your feelings with your partner too. They may be feeling lots of the same things. Having a baby is a huge thing and it will change your lives. While that is really exciting, it's natural to feel nervous too. You may wonder what sort of parents you'll be. You may also find that, if you had problems in your own childhood, thoughts of this come flooding back, even though you've pushed them to the back of your mind for years.

### You are not alone

You may also worry about losing your sense of who you are – of being you. While you're getting loads of attention at this time in your life – lots of appointments, people being excited for you – you may feel that it's the baby who's the focus of attention, not you. Your partner may feel shut out if they think all you're thinking about is the baby.

You'll both know that your life will be different after the baby is born. You'll be responsible for someone else, and you'll have to look after their needs. Going to the cinema or the pub will take planning – you won't be able to do things on the spur of the moment any more.

All these worries are normal and it may help to talk to others who've been through it. Your midwife may be able to suggest parenting groups or you may meet people in a similar situation at antenatal classes (see page 44).



It's natural to have worries about things such as whether your baby will be OK, how you'll cope with the birth, breastfeeding, going back to work and money matters.