

Talking to your doctor about your mental health

Your doctor can support your mental health during pregnancy and early parenthood.

If you're a new parent or expecting a baby and feel concerned about your mental health, talking to your doctor is a great place to start.

Your doctor can provide nonjudgmental and confidential mental health support, including:

- Mental health assessment.
- Medication, if needed.
- Follow-up care.
- Referrals for services like counselling, parenting support and family services.



Talking tip

You can complete PANDA's Mental Health Checklist, and share your results with your doctor.



Preparing for your appointment

Booking in: Whether you call or book online, request a double appointment with your doctor if possible. Then you won't feel rushed, and your doctor has enough time to complete a Mental Health Treatment Plan (referral for counselling) if needed.

If your appointment is a while away: Request to join the cancellation list for an earlier appointment.

Remembering what to say: Make notes or voice memos on your phone if you think of things to share with or ask your doctor.

Be brave and honest: Speak openly and honestly about your mental health. This helps your doctor to make an accurate assessment of your support needs.

In a mental health crisis? Call your doctor for an urgent mental health appointment and let them know you're pregnant and/or have a baby. If it's after-hours, go to the nearest hospital's emergency department to access mental health support.



“Research and contact therapists to find out more about them before requesting a referral through your doctor”
– Matt

Questions to ask your doctor

You have the right to fully understand your doctor's assessment of your mental health and recommended support options, including any referrals.

You could ask:

- What are my options for treatment/support?
- Who/what is the referral for? Is there a cost for the service?
- Will they contact me, or do I need to book an appointment?
- Are there other ways that I can care for myself and my baby at home?

If your doctor recommends medication:

- What are the possible antenatal/postnatal side effects?
- Is this medication safe to take while breastfeeding?
- How much better might I feel, and how soon?

Complete
PANDA's Mental
Health Checklist



Read more



PANDA Helpline

The **PANDA Helpline** provides counselling, referral and peer support from parents who have been through similar challenges.

- When someone calls, you will speak with a counsellor or peer worker who understands the challenges of being a new or expecting parent.
- PANDA counsellors and peer workers listen with kindness and compassion, help you explore support options, and can also provide information about appropriate specialist services.
- **If you are concerned for someone's safety**, it's vital that you seek immediate help by contacting either a local acute mental health service or your nearest hospital's emergency department.
- You can also contact PANDA for advice and support. If you believe that someone's life is at immediate risk, call 000.

 PANDA National Helpline 1300 726 306 | Monday - Saturday

 panda.org.au  info@panda.org.au