



Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Medication for mental health and the care of your newborn baby

Information leaflet



Gender inclusive language in maternity and perinatal services:

- This leaflet uses the terms woman or mother throughout. These should be taken to include people who do not identify as women but who are pregnant. Similarly, where the term parent(s) is used, this should be taken to include anyone who has main responsibility for caring for a baby.
- Partner refers to the woman's chosen supporter. This could be the baby's father, the woman's partner, a family member or friend, or anyone who the woman feels supported by and wishes to involve in their care.

I need to take medication for my mental health during pregnancy – what does this mean when my baby is born?

People need to take medication for many different physical and mental health problems during pregnancy. You have been given this leaflet as you and your doctor decided that it would be safest for you to take medication for your mental health during pregnancy. This includes antidepressants, antipsychotics and anti-anxiety medications.

Some babies can experience symptoms after birth because of these medicines. For this reason, your baby's oxygen saturation levels will be checked, and they will have regular reviews for these symptoms. The oxygen saturation level is measured using a small probe that is placed on your baby's wrist. It is completely pain free and non-invasive. You should not worry about these reviews as, even if babies do develop symptoms, these usually settle down within a few days without the need for any treatment.

If your baby does develop symptoms, you may need to stay in hospital longer while the extra checks to monitor your baby's symptoms are carried out.

If you go home soon after the birth, you will have daily visits or appointments in community until the third day after birth. If you or your health care professionals have any concerns, your baby will then be monitored more closely.

Do I need to do anything when I am pregnant?

- Make sure you tell the people involved in your care what medication you are taking
- Don't stop or make any changes to your medication without talking to your doctor first
- Take medication regularly and make sure you don't run out – if this happens make sure you talk to your GP or psychiatric doctor about what to do
- Your doctor, psychiatrist or midwife will tell you about any symptoms your baby might experience and what to look out for when you're discharged home

Some signs that could indicate that your baby is ill

Tell your midwife or GP without delay if your newborn baby:

- Is drowsy
- Looks pale
- Does not feed regularly (at least 6 to 8 times a day – although many breastfed babies may feed 8 to 12 times a day)
- Vomits large amounts of feed regularly and/or the vomit is green in colour
- Has not passed urine within 24 hours
- Has not passed meconium within 48 hours
- Is jittery (unable to rest/sleep, shaking)
- If you are worried for any other reason

Signs that your baby is seriously ill

Call for an ambulance for help if your baby:

- Is floppy when you pick them up.
- Feels hot (and has a temperature of 38°C or above)
- Feels cold (and has a temperature of 36°C or less)
- Has difficulty breathing, fast breathing, grunting while breathing, or if your child is working hard to breathe (this may look like they are sucking their stomach in under their ribs)
- Has a high pitched or weak cry

More information

Bumps – Best Use of Medicine in Pregnancy

www.medicinesinpregnancy.org

NHS – Is your baby or toddler seriously ill?

www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/health/is-your-baby-or-toddler-seriously-ill/

Royal College of Psychiatrists – Planning a Pregnancy

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/treatments-and-wellbeing/planning-a-pregnancy

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

We would like to thank the Oxfordshire Maternity Voices Partnership for their contribution in the development of this leaflet.

Author: Mental Health Lead Midwife
July 2022

Review: July 2025

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
www.ouh.nhs.uk/information



Making a difference across our hospitals

charity@ouh.nhs.uk | 01865 743 444 | hospitalcharity.co.uk

OXFORD HOSPITALS CHARITY (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1175809)

