



PANDAS

Pre and Postnatal Depression
Advice and Support



Pre/Postnatal Anxiety



Pre/Postnatal Anxiety

What is Pre/Postnatal Anxiety?

Anxiety is part of normal human experience, and is a reaction to situations which we find stressful, fearful or dangerous. It is sometimes known as the fight or flight response. It is simply your body preparing for action – either to fight danger, or run away from it as fast as possible.

When you are in danger, your body reacts by providing a 'boost' of adrenaline into your blood stream. A certain level of anxiety is normal, and can keep us away from dangerous situations. However, anxiety becomes a problem when it is severe, or inappropriate, and affects your quality of life. It can make you believe that a situation is worse than it actually is.

Anxiety disorders are common. Around 1 in 10 people experience anxiety disorders at some point during their lives.

What are the Symptoms of Pre/Postnatal Anxiety?

Anxiety can affect us in at least four different ways:

Feelings	Thoughts
Anxious, Nervous, Worried Feeling that something bad will happen Tense, Stressed, 'On Edge', Unsettled Unreal, strange, woozy, detached Panicky	Constant Worrying Can't Concentrate Racing thoughts Mind jumping Imagining the worse
Actions	Physical Reactions
Starting jobs and not finishing them Can't sit still and relax Always on the go Speaking quickly or more than usual Snappy or irritable behaviour Drinking or smoking more Changing in eating habits	Rapid Pulse, tight chest Sweating or flushing Feeling lightheaded Muscle tension Tiredness or weakness Nausea, loss of appetite



Pre/Postnatal Anxiety cont.

What can Cause Pre/Postnatal Anxiety

There may be many reasons why someone becomes anxious. Anxiety symptoms are common among Pre or Postnatal mental illnesses, and can also be linked to Depression, OCD, or PTSD. Some people may have an anxious personality
Others may have a series of stressful life events to cope with, which can be the birth of a son/daughter
Others may be under pressure at work or home, with family or financial problems
Having a traumatic birth or illness in pregnancy can cause Health Anxiety

Treatments for Pre/Postnatal Anxiety

There are a few different approaches to helping people with anxiety:

Self Help (including Guided, Online, Support Groups)

Your GP can help by providing links to support services in your area, offering guided self help programs (books or online courses, often supported by a therapist), or referring you on to specialist teams.

Talking Therapies

Counselling, such as CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) or INPT (Interpersonal Therapy), may be offered depending on your area. These encourage you to talk through problems, and address either the cycle of thoughts and behaviours, or how your relationships with others may contribute towards your feelings. These

Medications

Sometimes, medication can be prescribed to help alleviate symptoms of anxiety. These work by balancing the chemicals in your brain to ease symptoms, which can help you to function while issues are worked through. There are medications which are available while breastfeeding, however this should always be discussed with your doctor.



Postnatal Anxiety cont.

Support for Pre/Postnatal Anxiety

Your family and friends can play a big part in helping your recovery, for them to be able to help it is important you are honest with your friends and family about how you are feeling, and don't bottle up your emotions as this can cause tension. Allow them to carry out small tasks for you, such as house work, taking your baby for a walk, or simply looking after your baby for one hour every other day to allow you to do something you want. It is important you allow yourself to have some 'me time'

Self-help groups can offer you good advice and support on how to cope with anxiety as well as comfort to know that other mums are feeling the same as you, hearing other individuals experiences of anxiety as part of their postnatal depression can be a huge benefit, as you will be able to discuss techniques on how to cope, and have an understanding of each other's feelings. PANDAS Support Groups offer just that, in a non-judgemental, safe environment.

The most important support aid you can have is being able to talk to someone and be honest about your feelings and emotions. Ensure you write down on a piece of paper or a notebook the numbers of people you can call when you are feeling your worst, and make sure the list is readily available, so if you feel you are becoming aggressive, upset, angry or anxious you can call someone and know that you are not on your own. You can add PANDAS Help Line on your list 0843 28 98 401, and we will always be here to listen.



How PANDAS Can Help

What We Do

PANDAS offers Advice, Support, and a Voice to those with Postnatal Mental Illnesses. We are available online, in person via Support Groups, and via our Helpline.

PANDAS Helpline: 0843 28 98 401

Our helpline is open everyday between 9am-8pm. The PANDAS Helpline is manned by a team of trained volunteers who will be happy to chat to you and direct you to the right support for you.

Email Support: info@pandasfoundation.org.uk

Our PANDAS Email Support team are available seven days a week, 365 days a year. Our trained volunteers aim to respond to each email within 24 hours. Please get in touch if you'd like any more information regarding perinatal mental illness, or are looking for support for yourself or your partner, friend or colleague.

Social Media Pages

Our PANDAS Social Media team are online seven days a week, keeping you inspired, motivated and informed with current news and reports on perinatal mental health.

Facebook: [www.Facebook.com/PANDASfoundation](https://www.facebook.com/PANDASfoundation)

Twitter & Instagram: [@pandas_uk](https://twitter.com/pandas_uk)

Support Groups

Our PANDAS Support Groups offer a fantastic opportunity to meet up with other parents affected by perinatal mental illness. Our team of PANDAS Support Group Leaders are on hand to provide information about local activities and services, whilst also offering support and advice.



Get in Touch

Media Enquiries: mediateam@pandasfoundation.org.uk

General Inquiries: contact@pandasfoundation.org.uk

Support Groups: support.groups@pandasfoundation.org.uk

Email Support: info@pandasfoundation.org.uk

Helpline: 0843 28 98 401

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