

Looking after your emotional health during your pregnancy

During pregnancy, your body goes through many changes in a fairly short space of time. As your baby grows it takes minerals and vitamins from your own body and your hormone balance changes, which can affect your mood.

It can also take time to adjust to the big life changes about to happen, or, perhaps, come to terms with an unexpected pregnancy. It's quite normal to feel worried or anxious about these changes and new pressures and many other women will experience similar feelings.

- 1. You can talk to your midwife about any worries or anxieties you have during your pregnancy.** Your midwife will ask you some questions about your emotional health at your first appointment. While this is a really good opportunity to talk, you are encouraged to share any concerns you may have at any point. Your midwife knows that it is very common to feel down or anxious and there's no need to be worried that they might judge you or won't understand how you're feeling.
- 2. It's a good idea to attend Preparation for Birth and Beyond (PBB) - Leeds' antenatal education course.** As well as preparing for the arrival of your baby, it is also a great way to meet parents in your area. The courses are held in local Children's Centres, which also run other groups and activities for pregnant women and young families. Find your local Children's Centre here at <http://familyinformation.leeds.gov.uk/childrenscentres/Pages/default.aspx>
- 3. Need more support?** There are also other courses available, as well, talk to your midwife to find the right one for you. **Baby Steps** and **Pregnancy in Mind**, might be helpful if you are experiencing anxiety or depression and Leeds Teaching Hospitals offers a range of courses for parents-to-be.
- 4. Download the free Baby Buddy app** - it can act as your personal baby 'bubby' guiding you through your pregnancy and the first six months of your baby's life. Baby Buddy was developed by a charity called Best Beginnings with the help of mums, partners, midwives and GPs. You can view films of families from Leeds talking about their emotional health and their experiences as new parents and parents-to-be.
 - You can read the app's privacy policy and terms of use at <https://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/babybuddy-privacypolicy>
 - You can download the app free from Google Play or from the App Store. There is also a web version of Baby Buddy which you can find at <https://web.bestbeginnings.org.uk/web/lets-get-started>

4. Try to look after your general health

- **Exercise** - keeping active and taking some gentle exercise during your pregnancy can really boost your wellbeing. You can find your local leisure centre on the Leeds City Council website at: <https://active.leeds.gov.uk/findacentre>
Exercise like swimming, yoga (remember to tell your teacher that you are pregnant) or walking can all be great forms of exercise.
Leeds Let's Get Active is a city-wide programme which encourages people in Leeds to get more active. Find out more at <https://active.leeds.gov.uk/classesandactivities/leeds-lets-get-active>
If you have any concerns, talk to your GP, before you start to exercise.
- **Sleep well** - you can find helpful information about sleeping safely: www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/sleep-side-pregnancy-campaign
- **Eat well** - find information about how to eat well during pregnancy here: www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/healthy-pregnancy-diet
- **If you are a smoker** - One You Leeds offers non-judgemental support to help pregnant women stop smoking: <https://oneyouleeds.co.uk/>
- **Cut out alcohol** - you can find local advice and support about alcohol and pregnancy and information about the Leeds 'No thanks I'm pregnant' campaign here: www.alcoholandpregnancy.org.uk/ The Department of Health has also published new guidelines for pregnant women in advising that no level of alcohol is safe to drink in pregnancy: www.drinkaware.co.uk/alcohol-facts/alcoholic-drinks-units/latest-uk-alcohol-unit-guidance/ You can also try sharing this link with your friends and family for some tips on how they can support you during your pregnancy: www.alcoholandpregnancy.org.uk/support
- **Take time to relax** - try some different relaxation or breathing techniques: www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/i-m-looking-for-myself/what-can-i-do-to-feel-better/take-time-to-relax
- **Be mindful** - mindfulness is a technique which can help to bring our attention back from worrying, or thinking too much, to the present moment: www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/i-m-looking-for-myself/what-can-i-do-to-feel-better/be-mindful