

*There are a lot of challenges
and changes during this time*

module 2



Why do some women develop depression during pregnancy or following the birth?

Many women are surprised and disappointed when they find themselves feeling depressed during their pregnancy or following the birth of their baby. After all, most people expect this time to be a joyous one — and for some women it is. But there are also a lot of other challenges and changes that can make depression more likely during this time than at other times in a woman's life. These include:

- Changes in relationships with partner, family and friends.
- Significant role changes in becoming a mother.
- Leaving work or maternity leave.
- Lifestyle changes often including more financial pressures.
- Fatigue and not having enough sleep.
- Challenges of caring for a new baby along with other responsibilities.
- Significant physical changes to a woman's body (e.g., weight gain, changes to the breasts).
- Significant changes in hormone levels.

Therefore, even if everything goes “as planned” with the pregnancy, birth and first few months of the baby's life, these changes and challenges can make a woman vulnerable to depression.

Also, some women who have previously taken medications for depression or anxiety may choose to stop taking their medications prior to or during pregnancy, in some cases, this may lead to an increase in anxiety symptoms during pregnancy and the postpartum.