

## What is Antenatal Depression?

*"I was excited to be pregnant. I didn't expect to feel so down."*

Feeling down during pregnancy can start at any time and can happen suddenly or develop gradually. It may persist for many months.

### Symptoms of depression include:

- Feeling sad, irritable or unhappy most of the time.
- Loss of pleasure or interest in work, hobbies or things that used to be enjoyed.
- Significant weight loss or gain unrelated to pregnancy.
- Difficulty sleeping or over-sleeping nearly every day.
- Feeling restless or slowed down.
- Fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day.
- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt.
- Difficulties concentrating, remembering or making decisions.
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

If you have experienced 5 or more of these symptoms for a period of 2 weeks or more, you may be depressed.

The symptoms of antenatal depression are no different to the symptoms of depression at other times during one's life. Having antenatal depression can make you more vulnerable to postnatal depression.

**Depression is a treatable condition!**

## About PIRI

The Parent-Infant Research Institute (PIRI) is a vigorous and innovative Australian research institute focussing on understanding, developing and applying treatments to improve parent and infant well-being. PIRI believes that early intervention is the key to better outcomes for families.

While PIRI has a strong research focus, it also comprises a clinical unit (Infant Clinic). The Infant Clinic is a Centre of Excellence and provides a clinical service to assist with the difficulties experienced by parents and infants in the first years of life.

## The Aims of the Infant Clinic

**To help** parents deal with the stress and difficulties they experience when raising their infant.

**To assist** parents to find alternate ways of managing problems and relieving stress.

**To maximise** the child's future development through early assessment and intervention.

**To consult** with professionals about methods of working with and helping parents and infants.

## Beating the Blues Before Birth

### A Treatment for Antenatal Depression



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## Beating the Blues before Birth

- Are you struggling to cope?
- Have you been feeling flat, sad, or depressed, and find that you no longer get enjoyment from things?
- Do you feel anxious or overwhelmed?

### **Our program might be what you need.**

Addressing these issues before your baby arrives will give you, your partner, and your baby the best chance for a smooth transition into parenthood.

## What is the Beating the Blues before Birth study?

We are conducting a study to evaluate the effectiveness of our Beating the Blues before Birth program. All expectant mothers who are interested in participating receive:

- A free assessment session with a psychologist to discuss and choose the best treatment option for you and to help you link in with support services,
- A list of community support services, and
- A booklet from *beyondblue* on emotional health during pregnancy and early parenthood.

## Are you interested?

If you would like to take part in the Beating the Blues before Birth study, you will be randomly allocated to one of the following free-of-charge treatment conditions:

## Beating the Blues before Birth Program

Women receive 8 sessions of individual cognitive-behavioural therapy with a psychologist. Each session lasts 1 hour. Women learn coping strategies to help manage their moods. Seven sessions help women develop the following:

### **Behavioural Skills:**

- Understanding and managing moods
- Pleasant activities – how can I find the time?
- Relaxation on the run
- Assertiveness and self-esteem – telling others what I think and how I feel

### **Cognitive Skills:**

- Unrealistic expectations of parenting – Influences from the past
- My internal dialogue – The missing link
- Developing a more helpful thinking style
- Challenging my internal critic

In addition, one couple session is held to provide information and support to partners, as well as the opportunity for them to become involved in the therapeutic process. You do not need to have a partner to participate.

## Enhanced Routine Care

Women receive individual monitoring of their emotional well-being and referral to appropriate services in their local area. Individuals are networked with health professionals to provide a “safety net” of support.

## What Women have said about our Beating the Blues before Birth Program

“I found the program very beneficial. I have made significant progress and I can see the gains I have made as lifestyle changes.”

“I thoroughly enjoyed and found valuable the content of the sessions. I feel more empowered and I’m looking forward to the birth of my child.”

“I found the partner session very helpful. It highlighted a number of relationship issues for us.”

“Attending the sessions and trying the strategies has been helpful. My mood is better than it has been for a long time.”

“The program was a great start. It provided me with good strategies to put in place if depression kicks in again.”

“I am a lot more at ease with myself and aware of my thought processes now.”

## Please contact us on:

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Or find out more from our website  
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