



For You

✿ PREGNANCY AND NEW PARENTHOOD

Worry in pregnancy

A gentle, plain guide for a pregnant woman carrying heavy worry: what the anxiety is really telling you, why it is common and not your fault, and simple ways to carry it more lightly.

Who this is for: a pregnant woman who is carrying heavy worry or anxiety.

Cited: peer-reviewed research on anxiety in pregnancy.

Languages: English, Hindi, Marathi, and Kannada.

Read it free at weave.clinic/family

1

✿ WHEN THE WORRY GROWS TOO BIG

When the worry takes over

✿ IN SHORT

If pregnancy has filled your mind with worry, you are not weak and you are not a bad mother-to-be. An anxious mind in pregnancy is very common, and it can be helped.

Maybe the worry started small and then grew. Is the baby moving enough today. Is that ache normal. What if something goes wrong at the delivery. What if I am not ready. The thoughts arrive at night and will not switch off, and by morning you are tired before the day has even begun.

You are not imagining it, and you are far from alone. Feeling anxious or full of worry during pregnancy is very common, not a personal failing. In large studies, around one in five pregnant women report anxiety, and it tends to rise as pregnancy goes on, being highest in the last three months. So if the worry feels heaviest now, near the end, that is exactly when many women feel it most.

This booklet will not put a label on you. Only a doctor can do that. It will help you understand what is happening in your mind, and show you gentle, real ways to carry the worry more lightly.

about 1 in 5

pregnant women feel this worry

You are far from the only one. This is one of the most common feelings in pregnancy, in homes just like yours.



A quiet moment, a hand resting, the mind still racing.

Meera is thirty-one weeks along. From the outside everything looks fine, the pregnancy is healthy and the family is happy. But inside her head a voice will not rest. She lies awake counting kicks, replaying every small twinge, imagining the worst about the delivery. She has not told anyone how heavy it feels, because what would they say. Everyone keeps telling her this is the happiest time of her life.

For Meera, and maybe for you, that is the hardest part. You are told to be glowing and grateful, so the worry feels like a secret failing on top of everything else. It is not. The worry is not a sign that you will be a bad mother. It is a tired, over-loaded mind trying to keep your baby safe, working overtime.

● TRY THIS

For the next few days, just notice the worry without fighting it. When a worried thought comes, name it quietly: "there is the worry again." You are not solving anything yet. You are learning its shape, what time of day it comes, and what makes it louder.

2

✿ WHAT THIS REALLY IS

What antenatal anxiety is

✿ IN SHORT

Anxiety in pregnancy is a common, understandable state of a mind under load. Worry by itself is not harming your baby, and understanding it helps far more than blaming yourself.

The word for heavy, ongoing worry during pregnancy is antenatal anxiety. "Antenatal" simply means before birth. It is not a rare or shameful thing. It is one of the most common experiences of pregnancy, and it makes sense: your body is changing, your life is about to change completely, and your mind is trying to prepare for all of it at once.

You are far from alone in feeling this way. This kind of worry is seen among pregnant women across many countries and homes, and it is at least as common, if not more so, in ordinary middle and lower income families like many in India. This is not a rich-country problem or a weak-person problem. It lives in homes just like yours.



I thought something was wrong with me for feeling this way. Learning it had a name, and that so many others felt it too, was the first time I could breathe.

Meera, 31 weeks

Here is the part worth holding onto gently. The worry itself, the racing thoughts and the sleepless nights, is not by itself damaging your baby. Your baby is not harmed simply because you are anxious. What matters is not that you feel worry, but that you do not have to carry it alone and unhelped.

More, if you want it ^

Anxiety can show up in the body too, not just the mind: a racing heart, a tight chest, a churning stomach, trouble sleeping even when you are exhausted. These are the body's alarm system running too often, not signs that anything is wrong with the pregnancy. Knowing that the feeling is anxiety, and not danger, can itself take some of the fear out of it.

 REMEMBER

Feeling anxious does not make you a bad mother, and it is not, on its own, hurting your baby. It is a very common feeling that responds well to support. The kindest and most useful thing you can do is treat it as something to be helped with, not something to be ashamed of.

3

✿ WHAT HELPS MOST

What actually helps

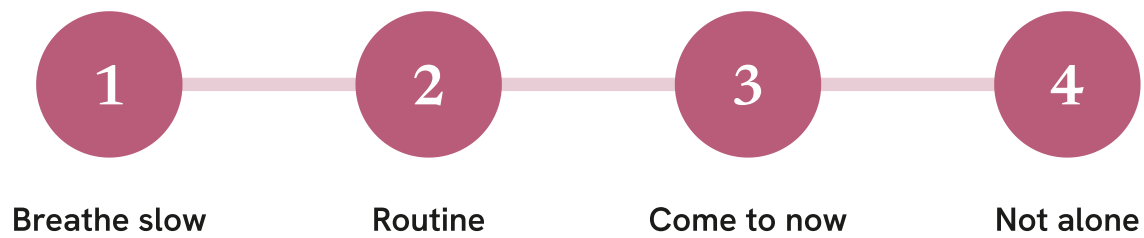
✿ IN SHORT

You do not need to force the worry away. A few simple, everyday practices genuinely calm an anxious mind in pregnancy, and none of them cost anything.

You cannot argue an anxious mind into silence, and you do not have to. What helps is not fighting the worry but softening the ground under it, a little, often.

Small calm habits, repeated daily, do more than any one big effort.

Simple mind and body practices can genuinely ease an anxious mind in pregnancy. Structured practices that teach slow breathing, gentle attention to the present moment, and calming the body have been shown to lower anxiety, low mood, and stress in pregnant women.



Four everyday anchors. Small, gentle, repeated, they steady the mind.

Breathe slow: a longer breath out than in, a few minutes at a time.

Keep a gentle routine: regular sleep, meals, and a short daily walk.

Come back to now: notice five things you can see, hear, or touch.

Do not carry it alone: say the worry out loud to someone kind.

Two of these are worth a closer look. First, breathing. When worry rises, the breath goes fast and shallow, which tells the body there is danger. Slowing the breath, especially making the out-breath longer than the in-breath, sends the opposite signal, and the body begins to settle. It is simple, free, and you can do it anywhere, even lying awake at 2am.

Second, not carrying it alone. Not carrying the worry alone genuinely matters. Women who feel they have people to lean on, a partner, family, or a trusted friend, tend to struggle less with anxiety in pregnancy, while feeling unsupported makes the worry heavier. You do not need a large circle. One person who listens without judging is enough to lighten the load.

More, if you want it ^

Talking-based help also works, and it does not have to mean sitting in a clinic. Guided programmes that teach ways to handle worried thoughts, including ones you can follow from home or on a phone, have been shown to reduce anxiety and low mood during pregnancy. So if reaching a clinic is hard, there are still real, proven ways to get help where you are.

● TRY THIS

Try this tonight. Breathe in slowly for a count of four, then out slowly for a count of six. Do it for just two minutes. Notice how your body feels a little heavier and calmer at the end. This is yours to use any time the worry rises.

4

✿ ORDINARY WORRY, AND WHEN TO BE SEEN

When to reach for more help

✿ IN SHORT

Some worry in pregnancy is completely normal. Worry that is heavy, constant, and stealing your sleep and your days is worth being seen for, not because it is dangerous, but because you deserve support.

Every pregnant woman worries sometimes. A little worry that comes and goes, that you can set aside to enjoy a good moment, is a normal part of carrying a child. That kind of worry does not need a doctor. It needs kindness and rest.

It is worth reaching for more help when the worry stops feeling like ordinary worry: when it is there almost all the time, when it steals your sleep night after night, when you cannot enjoy anything, when your body feels constantly on edge, or when frightening thoughts will not leave you alone. Heavy, constant worry that takes over your days is a signal to be seen, not a verdict on you.

Being seen early is worth it, and here is the honest reason why. It is not because worry alone harms your baby. It is because getting helped early is good for both of you. On average, mothers with high, untreated anxiety have a slightly greater chance of an early or smaller birth, and getting support lightens that load.

♥ A GENTLE WORD

If you take one thing from this page, let it be this. Reaching out is not because you have failed, and not because something is wrong with your baby. It is because you and your baby both do better when you are supported. Asking is strength, not weakness. If the worry ever turns very dark or frightening, please tell your doctor or a helpline soon, and do not wait.

More, if you want it ^

You do not need to be sure it is "bad enough" before you speak to someone. If you are wondering whether your worry has grown too big, that wondering is reason enough to mention it at your next check-up. A doctor or nurse would far rather hear about it early than have you carry it silently for months.

5

✿ GETTING READY FOR BIRTH

Preparing for birth with an anxious mind

✿ IN SHORT

An anxious mind often fears the delivery most of all. You cannot control everything about birth, but you can prepare in ways that make the unknown feel less frightening.

For many anxious mothers, the biggest fear is the birth itself. The pain, the unknown, all the things that could go differently. Some of this fear comes from not knowing what to expect, and knowing more often helps. Ask your doctor or nurse to walk you through what usually happens, step by step. A birth that has been explained is less frightening than one imagined in the dark.

You can also prepare gently in advance. Pack your bag early so it is one less thing to worry about. Decide who will be with you. Practise your slow breathing now, so it is familiar when you need it most. You cannot control everything about birth, but preparing the parts you can makes the rest feel smaller.

More, if you want it ^

It helps to remember that on the day, you will not be alone, and you do not have to hold it all in your head. Doctors and nurses do this every single day and will guide you through each stage. Your job is not to manage the birth. Your job is to breathe, to lean on the people around you, and to let them do theirs. Write down your questions beforehand so you do not have to remember them in the moment.

● TRY THIS

Make a short list of the things about the birth that scare you most. At your next visit, ask your doctor or nurse to talk you through just the top two. Turning a vague fear into a clear, answered question is one of the fastest ways to make it smaller.

6

✿ GETTING HELP

Reaching out

✿ IN SHORT

You do not have to carry this alone. Support comes in many forms, from the people near you to your doctor, and reaching out is a sign of strength.

Help is not one thing, and it does not have to start with a clinic. It can start with telling your partner how heavy it feels, or leaning on a mother, sister, or friend who will listen without judging. Feeling supported by even one trusted person makes anxiety easier to carry. In a joint family, where "log kya kahenge" can make you hide your feelings, finding that one safe person matters even more.

Talking-based help works too, and much of it can reach you at home. Guided programmes that teach ways to handle worried thoughts, including ones you follow on a phone, have been shown to reduce anxiety and low mood in pregnancy. So even if getting to a clinic is hard, real help can still come to you.

More, if you want it ^

When you do speak to a doctor, you do not need the perfect words. Just say it plainly: "I have been worrying a lot and it is hard to switch off." That is enough for them to help. A good doctor will listen, take it seriously, and work with you on a plan, and you stay part of every decision. Bring your partner or a family member if that makes it easier to say out loud.

 REMEMBER

There is no shame in worry, and there is no shame in asking for help with it. The mothers who reach out are not the ones who are failing. They are the ones taking care of themselves and their babies. That can be you, starting today.



The mind that worries so much tonight is the same mind already working hard to keep your baby safe, and it can learn to carry that love more gently.

● TRY THIS

Before you sleep tonight, name one small kind thing you can do for yourself tomorrow: a slow walk, a call to someone you trust, two minutes of slow breathing, or simply telling one person how you really feel. Write it down, and let tomorrow start there.

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

Dennis CL. Prevalence of antenatal and postnatal anxiety: systematic review and meta-analysis. *Br J Psychiatry*, 2017. doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.116.187179

Vazquez-Lara MD. The Impact of Mindfulness Programmes on Anxiety, Depression and Stress During Pregnancy: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Healthcare (Basel)*, 2025. doi.org/10.3390/healthcare13121378

Bedaso A. The relationship between social support and mental health problems during pregnancy: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Reprod Health*, 2021. doi.org/10.1186/s12978-021-01209-5

Neo HS. Internet-delivered psychological interventions for reducing depressive, anxiety symptoms and fear of childbirth in pregnant women: A meta-analysis and meta-regression. *J Psychosom Res*, 2022. doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychores.2022.110790

Grigoriadis S. Maternal Anxiety During Pregnancy and the Association With Adverse Perinatal Outcomes: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *J Clin Psychiatry*, 2018. doi.org/10.4088/JCP.17r12011

FURTHER READING

- NHS: Anxiety, depression and mental health in pregnancy
- Royal College of Psychiatrists: Mental health in pregnancy

This guide helps you recognise and understand. It is not a diagnosis. For that, see a professional.

-
- Feeling like it is all too much? **Read the crisis card.** Help is one page away.