

# Maternity and mental health

Maternal mental health disorders are the most common complications of pregnancy and childbirth. Approximately one in eight women in Illinois are affected by depression in pregnancy and postpartum.\*

Depression during pregnancy can cause complications such as premature birth. Postpartum depression can result in difficulty with breastfeeding and prevent bonding between new moms and their babies.

Left untreated, maternal mental health issues can have long-term negative impacts on a mother, baby and the entire family.

## Screening for depression

Aetna Better Health® of Illinois is committed to equipping health care providers with tools to screen for mental health disorders like depression and anxiety during pregnancy and after birth.

The earlier screening begins for depression as part of prenatal and postpartum care, the sooner members can get treatment.

### CPT codes for screening

**96160:** Administration of patient-focused health risk assessment instrument

**96161:** Administration of caregiver-focused health risk assessment instrument

### Encourage members to ask for help if they have any of these signs:

- ✓ Mood swings
- ✓ Anxiety and/or nervousness
- ✓ Difficulty concentrating
- ✓ Excessive crying
- ✓ Feeling of guilt or inadequacy
- ✓ Sadness
- ✓ Changes in sleeping or eating habits
- ✓ Difficulty accepting motherhood

## Free resources for providers

**Illinois DocAssist** is a free consultation and training service for Ob/Gyns and primary care clinicians for screening, diagnosis and treatment of mental health and substance abuse problems. Illinois health care professionals involved in the care of children, adolescents (up to age 21) and peripartum women can consult by phone with a member of the DocAssist team. Visit [DocAssistIllinois.org](https://DocAssistIllinois.org) for details.

[Schedule a consultation with DocAssist here.](#)

\*FOR DEPRESSION IN PREGNANCY DATA: Illinois Department of Public Health. Illinois Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) Detailed Data Tables. 2020. [https://dph.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/idph/publications/idph/data-and-statistics/prams/2020/2020-Illinois-PRAMS-Detailed-Data-Tables\\_5-12-2022.pdf](https://dph.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/idph/publications/idph/data-and-statistics/prams/2020/2020-Illinois-PRAMS-Detailed-Data-Tables_5-12-2022.pdf)



## Tips for self-care

Being a new parent, caring for a newborn, and keeping a home and family can be challenging — especially when new mothers feel anxious, depressed or overwhelmed. They may also feel frustrated because they think they haven't done enough.

### Here are some self-care tips you can share with new mothers:

#### ♥ Sleep

Getting 4-5 hours of uninterrupted sleep is one of the most effective things a new parent can do to start feeling better. Sharing the “night shift” with a responsible adult (like a partner, grandparent or friend) to feed and care for the baby can help the mother get needed rest.

#### ♥ Nutrition

New mothers should eat when their baby eats, especially if breastfeeding. Drink lots of water and eat high-protein snacks such as peanut butter, celery sticks or nuts. Set up a “feeding station” with a cooler that contains healthy snacks such as fruits and raw vegetables and water.

#### ♥ Exercise

Light exercise — such as a brief walk — can help elevate one's mood. Light yoga or stretching along with some deep breathing can help relieve stress.

#### ♥ Time-out

Take 15 minutes alone each day to focus on self-care. Mothers can use this time to take a shower, check in with family or friends, pray or meditate, write in a journal, or go for a walk.



## Support for members

**988:** National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

A resource for those needing support for a suicidal, mental health, and/or substance use crisis

**211:** The Local Community Resource

For help meeting basic needs like housing, food, transportation and health care

**911:** For immediate emergency response

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