

PREGNANCY THROUGH THE AGE OF CORONAVIRUS

A guide for Pregnant mums

Being pregnant during a world pandemic isn't what you signed up for. It's tough going. Understandably, we can get caught up in the chaos of world events or become focused on how labour and birth experiences might be affected. While it is important to stay informed, it is also important to focus on your pregnancy experience. Here's how:



Sink into thoughts about yourself as a mother

Becoming a Mum happens over time, in part by getting comfortable in your new role. This can start in pregnancy and will, of course, continue after you have had your baby. Through pregnancy, you might reflect on how you wish to mother, what sort of mum you'd like to be, and what you think you need to support you in your role. This is personal and unique to you, there are no 'right' answers.

You might wonder:

- What sort of mother do I hope to be?
- How do I imagine myself as a mother? What strengths am I likely to bring? What struggles am I likely to have?
- What role models do I have (or have I had) in my life to 'show me the way'?
- What makes for a good (enough) mother? What ingredients are needed?
- What support do I need in order to become the mother I would like to be? For instance, support from others, look after physical and emotional health, learn more about normal infant development.

Gestate your baby in your mind as well as your body

While your body is working away supporting the physical growth of your baby, you can become preoccupied with who this little person is. Allow the world outside to keep turning in its own way, and gift yourself some time to lean into thoughts about your baby. Turn your eyes inward and wrap your mind around your little one.

In some uninterrupted moments, you might wonder:

- Who is this little person I'm carrying?
- Who do I think s/he'll look like?
- What sort of temperament and characteristics might s/he have or develop?
- What strengths/qualities do you hope s/he might have?
- How do his/her movements express what s/he's like?

Of course, you can never be certain about who this little person is before you get to know them. But you can be curious and wondering.



Feel connected and caring

- Track your baby's development with a weekly tracker. This helps you to follow his/her development and helps you hold him/her in mind.
- Consider the ways you meet his/her needs, through good nutrition, exercise, rest, cleansing breaths, sending warm, loving feelings, thinking about him.
- Interacting with your baby when s/he kicks, moves or hiccups helps you feel connected. Take pleasure and delight in these things when you can.
- If you are partnered, help them to feel connected and caring towards baby by talking about the physical sensations you experience when baby moves, kicks, hiccups. In this way, you act as a bridge between your partner and baby, helping your baby get to know baby through you.

Pregnancy is a mixed experience, global pandemic or not

Mixed feelings are part of the picture with pregnancy, and into life with a new baby too. Joy and excitement can be mixed with resentment and anxiety; gains are tempered with losses; certainty and optimism can give way to self-doubt. At times we feel courageous, powerful, purposeful, mature, wise; before we oscillate to feeling just the opposite: helpless, weak, small, vulnerable, frightened. This is normal, and helps you prepare for the fluctuations and uncertainties of life with a baby. Allow those mixed feelings to stir around and co-exist. Get used to tolerating them. They are part of the experience.

Need more support?

We have you covered. *Centre for Perinatal Psychology* is a network of 60+ perinatal psychologists around Australia. We love supporting expectant and new parents in their journey.

www.centreforperinatalpsychology.com.au

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