

## Peri-Natal Depression and Anxiety

### Coping with depression and anxiety around childbirth

Pregnancy and the first year after giving birth are periods of great change. Emotional, physical, social and financial demands can make it difficult to manage.

It can be normal to feel both happy and sad during this time. You may feel excited about having your baby, but at the same time you may also worry that you won't be able to cope with the demands of motherhood.

Some women may feel sad more than they feel happy. In some cases, this feeling of sadness can become overwhelming and develop into depression.

When feeling depressed, the way you view yourself and your world may alter and your thinking can become more negative and self critical. You may also notice changes in how you feel mentally and physically and in how you behave. This may result in a vicious cycle developing which can keep the depression going and even make it worse.

The diagram below shows an example of a 'vicious cycle at work':



The vital things to realise are that **YOU ARE NOT TO BLAME FOR BEING DEPRESSED** and that **DEPRESSION CAN BE TREATED**. Sometimes the depression can get better by itself, but do not wait too long to seek help – if you start to feel much worse or even fear that you might think about harming yourself or your baby then talk to your midwife, health visitor or doctor as soon as possible.

If your depression is less severe but you would still like some help to manage it, there are other leaflets like this one that your health carer can give you – please ask them, or go to the SHARP website ([www.primarycare-selfhelp.co.uk](http://www.primarycare-selfhelp.co.uk)) to look at the leaflets yourself.

