

# Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder (PMAD)

Pregnancy and childbirth are major life events. For those about to become a mother, significant personal and family changes can naturally lead to emotional ups and downs. If these emotional responses exceed a normal range or become pathological, early assessment and treatment are necessary.

## Common Symptoms

Pregnant women may develop mental health issues due to discomforts of pregnancy, which can affect eating and sleeping patterns. Some may feel lonely and helpless because of lack of care and support from their partners. After childbirth, many mothers also experience brief emotional fluctuations and feel depressed, tearful, or worthless. While most of them recover after a few days, some mothers may develop persistent severe depressive symptoms within weeks postpartum, such as insomnia, loss of appetite, anxiety, crying, self-blame, or feeling unable to care for the baby. Suicidal tendency may even emerge in severe cases. Additionally, a small number of mothers may exhibit psychotic symptoms, such as confusion, hallucinations, or delusions, etc.



## Causes

Genetics, a history of mental illness, social and family factors, and physiological changes after childbirth.

## Treatment

Non-medication treatments include psychological counselling and supportive companionship, along with proper care to ensure the safety of both mother and baby. Medications such as antidepressants or sleeping pills can improve sleep and mood, while antipsychotic medications can alleviate hallucinations or delusions. Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) and electroconvulsive therapy are also effective treatment options.

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