



Depression during pregnancy rises in a generation

Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children have released new research about the rise in depression during pregnancy.

Today 25 per cent of young mums have high depressive symptoms compared to 17 per cent in the 1990s. Pregnancy can be especially difficult for anyone struggling with an eating disorder and is something that professionals should be made aware of.

Many people with an eating disorder will find the prospect of pregnancy and all of the associated changes in their body difficult to contemplate. Future fertility, if your periods have ceased, is also a consideration for many also. At ABC we would always recommend being very honest with your healthcare provider about any struggles you have regarding eating. This will ensure you get the right support and if pregnancy does occur, will help to safeguard your physical and emotional health as well as your baby's health during pregnancy and post natally.

If stores of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals and other essential nutrients are depleted, a woman's body will drain them to support the growth and development of the baby. If reserves are not sufficiently restored through healthy eating, there is the potential for the mother to become severely malnourished, and this in turn can lead to other complication such as depression, exhaustion and many other serious health complications.

Women with very low BMI or very high BMI are sadly at a higher risk for miscarriage. People suffering bulimia nervosa who continue to purge during pregnancy may suffer dehydration and electrolyte or cardiac irregularities which can cause health complications for mum and baby.

If you have currently suffering or you have recovered from an eating disorder and are considering pregnancy it is also very advisable to get support from a qualified dietician, with a specialist knowledge of eating disorders, who can guide you in the pre-conception period, during pregnancy and post-natally, to maximize the health outcomes for you and your baby.

Individual counseling during and after pregnancy can help you cope with your concerns and fears regarding food, weight gain, body image and being a new mum. Your GP and midwife should also be able to provide support if you are honest with them about your eating disorder. At ABC we know this is often really difficult, but it can really help you not to feel alone and enable you to safeguard your health in the long run.