

DEPRESSION IN PREGNANCY

Many women find themselves battling with depression and anxiety during pregnancy. It is usually as a result of the massive influx of hormones, which are necessary to sustain a natural and healthy pregnancy. Even though these hormones are needed, they can cause a myriad of other unwanted and uncomfortable ailments to work through, such as nausea, vomiting, dizziness, headaches, sleeplessness, and even depression. In some severe cases, these ailments become overwhelming and there are ways in which we can help.

The first thing we must do is evaluate the daily nutritional intake of our client. The goal is to eliminate as many of the harmful foods, especially those things high in Omega 6 fatty acids from the diet. Omega 6 fatty acids are found in all processed and prepared foods. They are the polyunsaturated and unsaturated fats that are listed in primarily all of our current favorite meal items. A good rule of thumb is to avoid all pre-packaged, pre-mixed, “easy” meal items as well as avoiding most all of the common oils in which to cook. Olive oil, an omega 9 fatty acid, is safe, but coconut oil is the best source of oil to use for cooking any foods (it is an omega 3 fatty acid). One battling with depression should cut out all foods cooked or fried in omega 6 oils, vegetable, canola, corn, etc. After eliminating foods in this category, one should also avoid foods high in sugar and grains made with white sugar (white pasta, white and any enriched breads, and rice). Cutting candies, ice creams, snack cakes and white breads, rice and pastas will make a huge difference in your hormonal balance and will inevitably help your battle with depression. Finally, we do encourage a large intake of raw, fresh vegetables and fruits, natural proteins (such as chicken, eggs, turkey, beef, and pork—preferably grass fed and organic; as well as raw, natural nuts like almonds, cashews, walnuts and macadamias—exclude peanuts as they can be harmful in pregnancy and with nursing), and whole grains (where the dietary fiber is at least 3 grams per serving and the ingredients are grains themselves, not enriched or tampered with). We also highly encourage an intake of fresh steam-distilled water in a ratio of 25 - 30 ounces per 50 pounds of body weight. (i.e. A pregnant woman weighing 180 pounds should consume at least 90 - 100 ounces of water daily. It is always better to round up than to round down) She should also cut all fruit juices, SODA, and MILK, as these products are seen to increase hormonal instability and could thus magnify your depressed state.

With these dietary interventions in place, we also need to build the omega 3 fatty acids within one’s daily intake. Omega 3 fatty acids are depleted tremendously with each pregnancy, and research shows that it takes 28 months after delivery for a mother’s natural stores of omega 3’s to return. Omega 3’s are also critically important during pregnancy and the postpartum period because babies from conception to 24 months are unable to produce or process omega 3 fatty acids without their mothers—hence one terrific reason to breastfeed until the age of two. Omega 3’s are known to increase intelligence in babies, to protect them from brain injuries such as autism, attention deficit and attention deficit with hyperactivity disorders, as well as pervasive developmental delay. They also are marvelous in eliminating the things that cause depression and other anxiety disorders because, among many reasons, they lessen the effects of serotonin decrease, which is a number one cause of general depression. They also naturally balance the hormones, which is the number one cause of depression during pregnancy and in the postpartum period. We encourage these supplements be taken properly and in order of recommendation for one to achieve the maximum results. As with any regimen, we are open to any questions you may have and want to minister to your needs in whatever way you see fit. Please do not hesitate to come to us. The more accurate our information, the better we are able to support and care for your individual concerns and needs. You are precious to us and we want you to feel your best during your pregnancy and postpartum period to be able to enjoy the blessings involved therein.

Supplements suggested:

1. **Juice Plus whole food supplement**—2 Orchard blend capsules in the AM, and 2 Harvest blend capsules in the PM to supplement and enrich the recommendations already made regarding daily intake of fresh fruits and vegetables. This supplement has been a proven aid in balancing hormones and managing depression.
2. **Healthy Woman Hormone Balancing Tea** is an exceptional supplement in helping to balance hormones which are most often the culprits for depression in women. Drinking 2 to 3 cups of tea daily for 12 weeks and cutting back to 1 cup daily thereafter and as needed will help your body to function as it should.
3. **Carlsons Super Omega 3**—a mercury free encapsulated fish oil that is completely natural and from the best sources. It is known to rapidly help with depression and other issues that affect one’s emotions and daily life. Because it has the highest source of EPA’s and DHA’s, elements critical to all women in all stages of life, and is the best omega 3 fatty acid supplement, we believe it to be beneficial to all women in all stages of life. We have seen tremendous results with the use of this product with depression and find it a necessary supplement to battle the ailment most fully. In severe cases, 2 capsules taken 4 times daily for 7 days are recommended. One capsule taken 4 times daily is the recommended dose from that point on. In milder cases, one can begin by taking one capsule 4 times daily. You will also need Carlsons E-Gems in conjunction with the Omega 3’s. You should take 400 iu Vitamin E to every 1600 mg. of Omega 3’s.

Supplements suggested (continued):

Calcium/Magnesium supplementation is also very helpful and recommended to aid in rest and sleep (which is often lacking in women battling with depression). In cases of depression, we recommend a dose of 2 capsules of Nature's Sunshine Cal/Mags prior to an afternoon rest, and 2 more capsules prior to bed. In some cases, we may choose to increase your daily dose depending upon your individual needs.

4. **Evening Primrose Oil**—sometimes recommended for women experiencing mild depression with other symptoms that are more bothersome, such as headaches and other hormonal imbalances. For a woman battling with severe depression, we would opt to exclude this as an alternative and stick with the Omega RX.
5. **Colloidal Minerals** is also a great supplement to be taken daily, as we do not get enough essential minerals in our daily diet as well. A capful of minerals once to twice daily is enough to meet our daily mineral needs. This is an optional supplement, but one that has great benefits with hormonal imbalances and specifically with depression.

His Grace Herbs and Midwifery carries many of the above supplements at the best possible prices. For those supplements we do not carry, we can recommend reputable companies from which to purchase. Please contact us if you are interested in more information.