

# What is Antenatal Depression?

*"I was excited to be pregnant. I didn't expect to feel so down."*

Feeling down during pregnancy can start at any time and can happen suddenly or develop gradually. It may persist for many months.

## Symptoms of depression include:

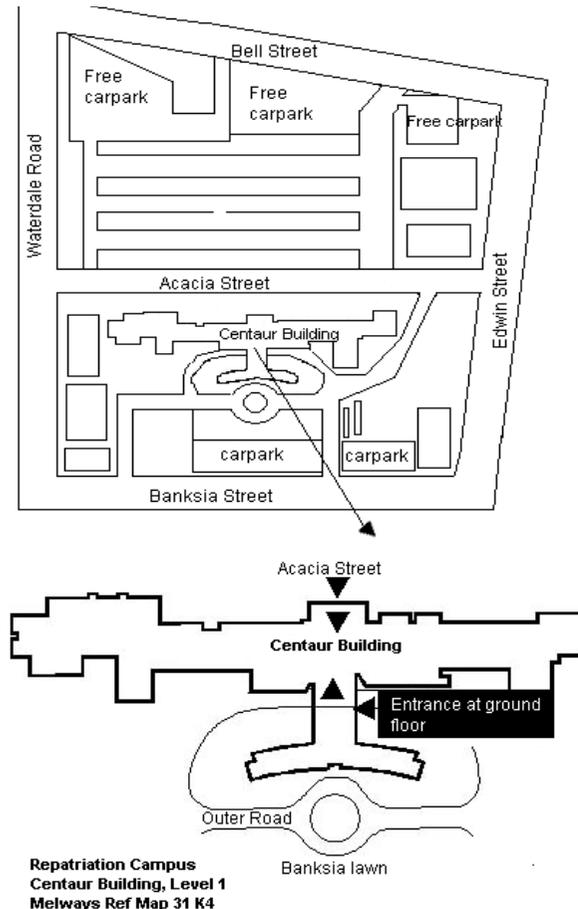
- Feeling sad, irritable or unhappy most of the time.
- Loss of pleasure or interest in work, hobbies or things that used to be enjoyed.
- Significant weight loss or gain unrelated to pregnancy.
- Difficulty sleeping or over-sleeping nearly every day.
- Feeling restless or slowed down.
- Fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day.
- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt.
- Difficulties concentrating, remembering or making decisions.
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

If you have experienced some of these symptoms for a period of 2 weeks or more, you may be depressed.

The symptoms of antenatal depression are no different to the symptoms of depression at other times during one's life. Having antenatal depression can make you more vulnerable to postnatal depression. Anxiety symptoms often accompany depression.

# About PIRI

The Parent-Infant Research Institute (PIRI) is a vigorous and innovative Australian research institute focussing on understanding, developing and applying treatments to improve parent and infant well-being. PIRI believes that early intervention is the key to better outcomes for families and it's The Infant Clinic provides a clinical service to assist with the difficulties experienced by new parents and infants.



# Beating the Blues before Birth

## A study exploring the benefits of treatment for antenatal depression



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## What is the Beating the Blues before Birth (BBB) study?

We are conducting a study to evaluate the benefits of our *Beating the Blues before Birth* psychological treatment program for both mother and baby.

## Are you interested?

If you would like to take part in the Beating the Blues before Birth study and if this study is suitable for you, you will be randomly allocated free-of-charge to *Beating the Blues before Birth* or Standard care.

All expectant mothers who may be experiencing depression and are interested in participating will also receive:

- A free assessment session with a psychologist to discuss the treatment options offered to help you link in with support services.
- A booklet from *beyondblue* on emotional health during pregnancy and early parenthood.
- With your permission, your GP will be kept informed.

## What else does participation involve?

Participation in this project will involve a telephone assessment and completing questionnaires at four time points: baseline (enrolment), 10 weeks post-enrolment, and post-birth at 3 months, 12 months and 24 months. The questionnaires and assessments will also include questions about your baby and a free developmental assessment at 2 years.

## *Beating the Blues before Birth* Program

This program is designed for women who are:

- Struggling to cope
- Feeling flat, sad, or depressed, and finding less enjoyment from things
- Feeling anxious or overwhelmed

Women receive 8 sessions of cognitive-behavioural therapy. Each session lasts up to one hour. Women learn coping strategies to help manage their moods. Seven sessions help women develop the following:

### **Behavioural Skills:**

- Understanding and managing moods
- Pleasant activities – how can I find the time?
- Relaxation on the run
- Assertiveness and self-esteem – telling others what I think and how I feel

### **Cognitive Skills:**

- Unrealistic expectations of parenting – Influences from the past
- My internal dialogue – The missing link
- Developing a more helpful thinking style
- Challenging my internal critic

In addition, one couple session is held to provide information and support to partners, as well as the opportunity for them to become involved in the therapeutic process. You do not need to have a partner to participate.

## Standard Routine Care

Women receive individual monitoring of their emotional well-being and referral to appropriate services in their local area. Individuals are networked with health professionals to provide a “safety net” of support.

**To see if this program may suit you,** we will contact you. Alternatively, you can let your midwife know you are interested or ring us on **9496 4496**.

**Email** [piri@austin.org.au](mailto:piri@austin.org.au)

Or find out more from our website [www.piri.org.au](http://www.piri.org.au)

