

# Start talking.



**National Telehealth Program for Families  
Experiencing Perinatal Depression and Anxiety**



**covid-19**  
support



## How do I make a Start Talking appointment?

To book an appointment, or find out more information, please call Gidget Foundation Australia on **1300 851 758** or email [contact@gidgethouse.org.au](mailto:contact@gidgethouse.org.au)

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### WHAT IS START TALKING?

Gidget Foundation Australia's **Start Talking program** provides **FREE** telehealth psychological counselling services for expectant and new parents nationwide.

Services are provided by psychologists and social workers and are delivered via a **video call service**, similar to FaceTime or Skype.

### WHO DOES START TALKING SUPPORT?

**Start Talking** is available to any expectant and new parents who have a diagnosis of, or are at risk of developing, a perinatal mood or anxiety disorder and who:

- are pregnant; or
- have a baby up to 12 months old.

Support is also provided to people who have experienced a pregnancy or childbirth-related loss, such as stillbirth, miscarriage or termination, within the last 12 months.

Partners are able to access our specialised services as well.

To be eligible for the Start Talking program, you need to be located more than 20kms from a Gidget House\*.

### HOW MUCH DOES START TALKING COST?

Our perinatal mental health specialists provide up to **10 psychological counselling sessions free of charge** within a calendar year. (The cost of these 10 sessions is fully funded by Gidget Foundation Australia in collaboration with Medicare Australia's Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioner's initiative).

### HOW DO YOU ACCESS START TALKING?

To access Start Talking, you will need a referral from a GP, including a mental health plan.

You can also access the service without a mental health plan on a full fee paying basis, if you prefer.

\* Geographic location criteria may sometimes apply



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## WHAT IS PERINATAL DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY?

Depression and anxiety during pregnancy and the first year of parenting (the perinatal period) affects around 20% of mothers and 10% of fathers. Previously known simply as Postnatal Depression, we now recognise that depression and anxiety can have an impact during pregnancy as well as after birth. Treating anxiety can minimise the risk of depression developing.

These are recognised, diagnosable and recoverable medical conditions; the result of biological, psychological and social factors. Left untreated, the impact on the mother, father, child and other family members can be profound.

Perinatal depression and anxiety should not be confused with the 'baby blues' that occur 3 to 5 days after giving birth. These feelings of tearfulness and anxiety affect around 80% of mothers, are transient, and will dissipate.

## What should you be looking out for?

Risk factors for perinatal depression and anxiety can include:

- Lack of support or understanding from partner
- Lack of emotional and practical support from family and friends
- Stress related to finances, work or moving house
- Other emotional stress or trauma (e.g. unplanned pregnancy, reproductive issues, difficult birth, miscarriage or stillbirth)
- Recent or otherwise significant bereavement
- A perfectionist, self-critical personality
- Age less than 18 years or over 35 years
- Previous mental health problems (e.g. depression, bullying in adolescence, or family)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- Culturally and linguistically diverse situation
- Rural and remote location

## Symptoms can include:

- Inability to enjoy activities previously enjoyed
- Unable to concentrate or focus, make decisions or get things done
- Feeling extremely alert, 'on edge', or irritable
- Physical symptoms such as heart palpitations, constant headaches, sweaty hands, loss of appetite
- Feeling numb, hopeless and remote from family and friends
- Feeling out of control
- Unable to rest, even when baby is sleeping, and tired on awakening
- Nightmares and /or flashbacks of difficult birth events
- Avoiding situations that remind you of the birth
- Thoughts of harm befalling yourself, baby or partner
- Feelings of guilt, shame, or repetitive thoughts
- Feeling trapped or in a dark hole or tunnel with no escape
- Feelings of grief, loss anger, tearfulness
- Feeling lethargic or hyperactive



Gidget Foundation Australia is a not for profit organisation that provides programs to support the emotional wellbeing of expectant and new parents.

The Gidget Foundation was named after a vibrant and joyful mother, who suffered from unrecognised postnatal depression. Her nickname was 'Gidget'. The Foundation evokes Gidget's warmth and lively spirit. Established by her friends and sisters, the organisation has grown and is now supported by passionate individuals, community leaders, health professionals, businesses and government.

New babies bring delight along with challenges. Nearly **1 in 5 mothers** and **1 in 10 fathers** will suffer perinatal depression and anxiety; that's around 100,000 Australians each year.



Gidget Foundation Australia exists to promote the importance of emotional wellbeing among expectant and new parents, their healthcare providers and the wider community to ensure that those in need receive timely, appropriate and supportive care.