

Do you take medication for a  
mental health condition?

Are you thinking about having a baby?  
Are already pregnant?

# Pre-conception Advice



It is really important to speak to your GP, pharmacist or other health professional if you take medication for your mental health and are thinking about having a baby or are already pregnant. They can:

- Give you information about your medication and pregnancy
- Discuss your choices with you
- Refer you to a specialist perinatal mental health service for more support and advice.

We understand you may be worried about taking medication if you become pregnant but you need to discuss your medication with them before making any changes so that you stay well.





Do not stop your medication or reduce your dose suddenly as you may become unwell.

Staying well during pregnancy is important for mums as well as babies, so for some women, remaining on medication during pregnancy is the best choice.

Having a baby can be an exciting yet challenging time. If you have a pre-existing mental health condition, you are at a greater risk of experiencing a relapse during this period than at other times, but there is support available to help you cope with your pregnancy and keep you and your baby healthy.

SMABS is the Specialist Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Service for Bradford, Airewharfe and Craven.

Some women are at much higher risk of serious mental illness such as depression and postpartum psychosis, in pregnancy or after baby is born.

You may be taking your regular medication and be well now or maybe you have stopped medication for some weeks, months or even years. The risk of serious mental illness associated with pregnancy and the postnatal period is not reduced, just because you are well now.

### **SMABS provides pre-conception advice:**

This is an opportunity to discuss what it may be like for you to experience pregnancy, birth and care for a baby.

- You can find out more about your illness in pregnancy and after baby is born.
- You may have questions about the safety of your medication you are taking in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

You may want to discuss coming off your medication but worry you will become unwell. This appointment will address these questions and provide you with information and options.

## You can be referred to SMABS for preconception counselling

- If you are a woman with a history of serious mental illness including
  - bipolar affective disorder
  - schizophrenia
  - schizoaffective disorder
  - severe depressive illness, particularly if associated with suicidality and/or psychotic features.
  - post-partum psychosis
- If you have a family history of
  - post-partum psychosis
  - bipolar affective disorder
  - or other severe mental illness, including severe depression or postnatal depression, particularly
- if requiring in-patient treatment
- If you are on Sodium Valproate, Lithium or other anti-epileptic drugs prescribed as a mood stabiliser in bipolar or schizo-affective disorder.



## We're here to help you

**There is excellent support available in your local area, including a specialist perinatal mental health service.**

You can find out more about our service at:

**<https://www.bdct.nhs.uk/services/specialist-mother-baby-mental-health-service/>**

W: [www.bdct.nhs.uk](http://www.bdct.nhs.uk)

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