

Follow – Up Treatment of Perinatal Mental Health Conditions

Once patient is determined to have a mental health condition,
repeat screen in 4 weeks and re-evaluate treatment plan via clinical assessment

If no/minimal clinical improvement after 4 weeks

If clinical improvement and no/minimal side effects

- If patient has no or minimal side effects, increase antidepressant medication dose until full symptom remission (e.g., EPDS/PHQ-9 < 10, GAD-7 < 5, PC-PTSD < 3)
- If patient has intolerable or serious side effects, taper medication to discontinue, and simultaneously start new antidepressant
- Maximize other treatments (e.g., therapy, lifestyle changes, support groups)
- If late in pregnancy, given physiological changes in pregnancy, may need to increase the dose of antidepressant above usual therapeutic range (e.g., sertraline [Zoloft] 250 mg per day rather than 50-200 mg)
- Consider adding additional medication. See page 20.
- Repeat screens every 4 weeks and re-evaluate treatment via clinical assessment until remission, or, if you are not continuing to manage the patient, provide a hand-off to the primary care physician

**If clinical
improvement
and no/minimal
side effects**

- Re-evaluate every month in pregnancy and postpartum and adjust med accordingly. See page 20
- Encourage patient to stay on medication and continue therapy
- If you are not continuing to manage the patient, provide a hand-off to primary care physician

If you are not continuing to manage the patient postpartum:

- Contact PCP and provide handoff
- Ask patient to make appointment with PCP
- Send summary to PCP
- See patient again to make sure she is in treatment with PCP

Once patient experiences remission of symptoms (e.g., 2 sequential EPDS/PHQ-9 scores < 10, GAD-7 < 5, PC-PTSD < 3)

Can consider tapering antidepressant when patient has been in remission for ≥ 6 months for depression and ≥ 12 months for anxiety

Taper medication slowly to minimize risk of relapse and discontinuation syndrome

- Shorter acting medications (e.g., paroxetine [Paxil], venlafaxine [Effexor]) have higher chance of discontinuation syndrome and thus need to be tapered slowly
- Establish postpartum birth control plan to help women make informed decision regarding family planning

Adjunctive Support Options

Talk to your patient about adjunctive support options such as:

- Self-care (See Self-Care Plan (page 27))
- Balanced nutrition and Substance avoidance
- Sleep hygiene
- Mindfulness
- Exercise
- Find resources for [moms and families](#) here.
- Books and workbooks (e.g., The Pregnancy and Postpartum Anxiety Workbook by Pamela S. Wiegartz and Kevin Gyoerkoe)

Social and Structural Determinants of Health

Ask about/consider social and structural factors that can be a barrier to engagement in care:

- Access to stable housing
- Access to food/safe drinking water
- Utility needs
- Safety in home and community
- Immigration status
- Employment conditions
- Transportation
- Childcare

Refer to social services as indicated