



MEDICINE & PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH

A THREE STEP DECISION MAKING PROCESS IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING STARTING, STOPPING OR ALTERING MENTAL HEALTH MEDICATION IN PREGNANCY OR POSTPARTUM.

1) Write Down Your Personal Knowledge

- Ask professionals for factual information (your family doctor, psychiatrist, naturopathic doctor, etc.).
- Include information about: potential side effects on you, all available options for treatment, risks for baby and the **risks if you do not treat your mental health.**
- Visit reputable websites for factual information:
 - www.mothersbaby.org
 - <https://www.womenshealth.gov/mental-health/mental-health-conditions/postpartum-depression>

Taking the Med	
<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>

Not Taking the Med	
<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>

2) Examine Social Norms that Might Impact your Decision

Does your culture place value on one decision or another?

Here are some frequently held beliefs about mental illness and medication that are factually inaccurate:

- *mental health problems and medication are a sign of weakness*
- *you only take medication if you are severely depressed or suicidal*
 - *if you just try harder you wouldn't be struggling*
- *women who have mental health concerns cannot be good mothers*
 - *if I take medication I will lose control of myself*
 - *I can become addicted to medication for mental health*

3) Examine the Beliefs and Attitudes of Those Around You

The people around you including partners, family and friends will all hold their own beliefs about medicine in the perinatal period. Doctors are no exception, research shows they may have their own biases. Pay attention to what assumptions they make and how they differ from your own values. Find people who support you and talk to them about your choice.



www.rootedsupport.ca

The information on this handout has been researched and compiled by Registered Psychologist, Kristin Romanoski. If any part of this document is altered, the information can no longer be relied upon as information provided by a Registered Psychologist. If you're unsure, please feel free to contact Kristin directly. © 2020