

Perinatal Red Flags and Risk Indicators



Red Flags

- Recent **significant** changes in mental state or emergence of new symptoms.
- **New** thoughts or acts of violent self-harm.
- **New** and **persistent** expressions of incompetency as a mother or estrangement from the infant.

Perinatal risk indicators (Antenatal and postnatal period)

- Women with a history of bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, severe depression, other psychotic disorder or previous inpatient/crisis care should be referred to the perinatal team; this group is at increased risk of severe postpartum episodes.
- Women with a family history of a first degree relative with bipolar disorder or puerperal psychosis should be referred even if presenting with mild symptoms of mental disorder.
- Antenatal presentation can be a predictor for post-natal episode of mental ill health; discuss all antenatal referrals with perinatal team.
- High risk period is **1- 10 days** post-natal but the threshold should be lower for women up to **10 weeks** postnatally.
- Women who are presenting with uncharacteristic symptoms and marked changes to normal functioning. This can include symptoms of confusion and general perplexity.
- Partner, family or friends report significant change in presentation and acting out of character.
- Older professional women with depression who appear to be functioning at high level.
- Women who present with anxiety/panic attacks or unusual or overvalued ideas (ideas that seem out of context or extreme).