

PREGNANCY AND STRESS

SOMETIMES IT FEELS LIKE BLACK WOMEN CARRY THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD ON OUR SHOULDERS

Black women are often the problem-solvers, educators, nurturers, and primary sources of income in their families-- they are the key pillars of support for extended families. Balancing many roles is stressful, and Black women may also experience chronic stress from their early childhood.

Experiencing implicit bias, racism, and preventable negative birth outcomes increases the stress Black women and babies experience during pregnancy.

Negative and high-level stress can increase the chances of preterm birth – (birth before 37 weeks of pregnancy), which is the leading cause of infant mortality.

SIGNS OF NEGATIVE STRESS:

- You feel overwhelmed and worried rather than positive
- You feel anxious or feel bad
- You have physical symptoms that make it difficult to feel comfortable or well rested

Not all causes of your stress can completely go away. But you can take some steps towards experiencing a more stress-free and healthier pregnancy:

- **Build a supportive community** to help you with groceries, running errands, or childcare
- **Rest more.** Introduce daily rest periods and go to sleep as early as you can
- **Find exercises that you enjoy** and are safe during pregnancy
- If the weather conditions and air quality permit, **spend time outdoors**
- **Take care of yourself.** Build simple activities in your routine that make you happy: reading, weaving, or get a massage/ beauty appointment etc.
- **Learn about what to expect** during the rest of your pregnancy and delivery
- **Write down any questions you have before your doctor appointments** and ask someone to go with you to help navigate care
- **Build your circle of support.** Talk to your family and friends about your worries. Join support groups
- **Listen to your body.** Tell your doctor immediately if you feel something is wrong and how you feel about your needs

BUILD YOUR CIRCLE OF SUPPORT - VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS!



PICTURED: DE-STRESSING YOGA DURING BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK 2022 WITH DANA CLARK, YOGA INSTRUCTOR

During pregnancy, new triggers can make you feel more worried. These things may include:

- Physical discomforts of pregnancy
- Hormonal changes that can lead to sudden changes in your mood and feelings
- Negative experiences in healthcare
- Finances and other responsibilities
- Previous birth outcomes and past traumatic events