

Prevention of Pneumonia and Respiratory Tract Infection – Psychological Self-Care (For Pregnant Women)



Department of Health

Facing with the unexpected epidemic, pregnant women may have more worries about being infected than others and have paid extra attention to personal and home hygiene. It is understandable that these are all natural responses to protect the foetus. However, some pregnant women may be over-worried or nervous easily, they would inadvertently have thoughts or behaviours that are too extreme and inflexible. Intense emotions are subsequently persisted which affect the well-being of themselves and their foetus or even their family relationship.



Researches show that women with healthy mental well-being have stronger immunity. Those who maintain stable mood with good physical health and mental well-being, can provide better immune environment for their foetus. In addition to following the infection control guidelines of the Centre for Health Protection to prevent infection, you can refer to the following suggestions to enhance your “psychological immunity”.

Psychological Self-Care Tips



- ✓ **Maintain a regular routine** and **take care of the basic needs** to boost immunity, e.g. maintaining a balanced diet, having adequate rest and sleep.
- ✓ **Limit exposure to overwhelming information** while trying to verify and access information only from reliable sources, and to avoid your mood being negatively affected.

- ✓ **Stay physically active**, for relieving and reducing common pregnancy-related discomforts, such as fatigue, oedema and varicose veins; for maintaining mental well-being as well as alleviating insomnia, nervousness, anxiety and depression.



Suitable Exercise for Pregnant Women

- ✓ **Cultivate a positive and realistic mind-set**, e.g. remind yourself that *“My baby’s check-ups are all normal. I have taken adequate preventive measures and I am symptom-free. So, it’ll be fine.”*, *“Although the outbreak is worrying, it’s not a bad thing to stay at home before delivery. After all, the outbreak will pass eventually.”*



- ✓ Spare time for leisure activities **based on your interests**, e.g. listening to music.

- ✓ **Enhance the bonding with your foetus**. Spend time for activities such as writing a pregnancy diary or making audio recordings of foetal growth, decorating room with your partner, sorting baby clothing by size, packing your bag for labour or reading information about caring for a newborn.



Health Information for Infancy (Birth to First Month)

- ✓ **Stay connected with relatives and friends** via various means such as video call. Chat with other mothers or expectant mothers to share experience in labour and parenting.

- ✓ **Seek support** from other family members for household chores and/or childcare whenever possible, to **avoid burnout**.

Turn to next page.....

Psychological Self-Care Tips (Cont.)



- ✓ **Be aware of your emotions.** When you are worried or notice that you become particularly nervous, focus on thinking **practical coping strategies**. If you find it hard to let go of your worry or if there is no immediate solution available, try an effective way to reduce your worry – **plan a specific time to worry in** as much as you like (such as 15-30 minutes after dinner). When you are worrying outside of that specific time, just briefly list the worries and then try to refocus on the present task at hand or activities you are interested in. **Do not set the specific worry time before bedtime** to avoid negative impact on falling asleep and sleep quality.

- ✓ Practise **relaxation exercise** before bedtime or anytime you find it appropriate, e.g.



Progressive muscle relaxation



Diaphragmatic breathing



Mindful breathing



Guided imagery (only available in Cantonese)



Seeking Professional Help

If significant and persistent distress are observed, please consult your family doctor/ obstetrician, or approach the following community resources:

Hotline/Organisation (listed in arbitrary order)	Contact	Service Hours
Social Welfare Department	Hotline: 2343 2255 2020 Psycho-education information Hub for Combatting the Novel Coronavirus: https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_cps/sub_2020/	24 hours
Hospital Authority	Mental Health Direct (hotline): 2466 7350	24 hours
Hong Kong Red Cross	"Shall We Talk" Psychological Support Service: 5164 5040 Link: https://www.redcross.org.hk/en/covid_pss.html	Make appointment via WhatsApp

For health information on prevention of pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, please read our advices for pregnant women and parents.



Pregnant women



Parents



For advice on how to deal with children emotions triggered by the infection control measures, please read our psychological self-care tips for parents.



For updated health information on Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), please visit the website of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health.

