



Natural Remedies for Anxiety During Pregnancy: A Comprehensive Christian Guide

Understanding Anxiety During Pregnancy

Feeling anxious during pregnancy is **remarkably common** and nothing to be ashamed of. Medical experts estimate that about **one in five women** will experience an anxiety disorder around the perinatal period ¹. Hormonal shifts, past pregnancy losses, health worries, and the enormous life changes on the horizon can all contribute to heightened anxiety ². Pregnant mothers often worry about their baby's health, the birth process, finances, or the adjustment to parenthood. A certain level of worry is *normal* – in fact, mild anxiety can be a protective motivator (for example, prompting you to prepare and care well for your baby) ³.

However, when anxiety **escalates to the point of feeling overwhelming or constant**, it can interfere with daily life and rob the joy from this season. Symptoms may include persistent worry, tension, irritability, racing heartbeat, dizziness, insomnia, or even panic attacks ⁴ ⁵. If you find your mind “spiraling” with worst-case scenarios or you’re avoiding things you used to enjoy due to fear, you’re not alone and help is available. Studies show perinatal anxiety often goes underdiagnosed in routine care ¹, yet *treating it benefits both mother and baby*. Untreated severe anxiety has been linked to higher risks like preterm birth or low birth weight ⁶, so it’s important to address.

From a Christian perspective, it’s vital to recognize that experiencing anxiety does *not* make you a “bad Christian” or indicate a lack of faith. It means you are human. Many faithful people in Scripture dealt with fear and anxiety. The Bible’s frequent command “*Fear not*” implies God knows we are prone to fear, and He lovingly calls us to trust Him in the midst of it. Jesus comforted His followers, “*Let not your hearts be troubled*” (John 14:27), precisely because He knew they *would* feel troubled at times. The goal is not to pretend anxiety never happens, but to learn how to respond in healthy, faith-filled ways when it does. In this guide, we’ll explore a variety of **natural remedies for anxiety during pregnancy** – practical lifestyle changes, mind-body techniques, and spiritual practices – all reinforced by both **medical research** and **Biblical wisdom**. These approaches can help calm your mind, care for your body, and fortify your trust in God during this precious season.

Biblical Encouragement for Anxious Moms-to-Be

Before diving into specific remedies, let’s seek a foundation in God’s Word. **Scripture has much to say about anxiety**, and meditating on these truths can renew your mindset. One of the most beloved passages is *Philippians 4:6-7*, which gently instructs: “*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*” The result promised is “*the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*” Notice, the verse doesn’t simply command “**stop feeling anxious**” – rather, it invites you to **turn your anxieties into prayers**. When worries strike (e.g. “*Will my baby be healthy?*” or “*How will we manage financially?*”), **bring those concerns to God**. He is a loving Father who *cares* for you: “*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you*” (1 Peter



5:7). Many moms testify that when they verbalize their fears to God and ask for His help, they experience a supernatural calm that could only be God's peace guarding their heart.

Importantly, **prayer is not a last resort; it's a first-line remedy**. As one Christian author humorously observed, too often we *replace* Philippians 4:6 with "...let your requests be made known to Google." In our tech-saturated age, an anxious mom might compulsively search online for every symptom or "what if" scenario, only to end up *more* panicked. But *"we cannot type, scroll, click, and read our way to peace. There is no 'peace of Google,' only the peace of God"* ⁷ ⁸. **Excessive Googling** tends to fuel anxiety with worst-case information, whereas **turning to God in prayer and Scripture leads to peace** ⁷. Consider adopting a personal policy: when you feel the urge to frantically search the internet about pregnancy fears, **pause and pray instead**. Open the Psalms before you open a search engine. Psalm 94:19 says, *"When anxiety was great within me, Your consolation brought me joy."* God's Word has a unique power to console and steady us in uncertainty.

Many expectant Christians find comfort in **praying through passages like Psalm 139**, which marvels at God's intimate knowledge of us and the unborn child. *"You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb... Your eyes saw my unformed body"* (Psalm 139:13,16). Reflecting on God's handiwork in your baby's development can turn worry into worship. **Wonder is a great antidote to worry** ⁹. When you remember that the same God who flung the stars is *knitting together your baby*, and that *"all the days ordained for [your child] were written in His book before one of them came to be"* (Psalm 139:16), you can rest in His sovereignty. **God is in control** of your pregnancy in a way that Googling or obsessively monitoring can't match ¹⁰ ¹¹. He is also *with you* at every moment (*"During ultrasounds, You are there... through worry-ridden nights, You are there"* ¹²).

Lastly, **cling to God's promises**. Verses like *Isaiah 41:10*, *"So do not fear, for I am with you... I will strengthen you and help you,"* or *Psalm 56:3*, *"When I am afraid, I put my trust in You,"* can be repeated in moments of panic. Some mothers post these verses on their bathroom mirror or save them in their phone to meditate on whenever anxiety swells. Filling your mind with God's truth crowds out the voice of fear. **Faith and anxiety cannot easily coexist** – as you feed your faith (through prayer, worship, Scripture), anxiety finds less room to dominate.

With this spiritual groundwork laid, let's look at practical **natural remedies and coping strategies** that, alongside prayer, can help you manage anxiety during pregnancy. Think of it like caring for both **soul and body** – addressing the physical side of anxiety *and* the spiritual/mental side. God designed us as integrated beings, and we honor Him by stewarding our mental health through wise means.

Holistic Strategies for Anxiety Relief in Pregnancy

1. Prayer, Meditation, and Deep Breathing

We've already highlighted **prayer** as a cornerstone. Making prayer a daily practice – even a few minutes of honest conversation with God each morning or night – can significantly ease your worries. In fact, **research confirms the anxiety-reducing power of spiritual practices**. In one clinical trial, pregnant women with high anxiety participated in a faith-based self-care program that included prayer, trusting God's promises, and cultivating hope. Their anxiety levels (measured by a standardized questionnaire) dropped by over **50%** within a month, whereas a control group's anxiety remained virtually unchanged ¹³ ¹⁴. This dramatic result (an average score reduction from about 52 to 25 points in the intervention group) shows that

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spiritual interventions can tangibly improve anxiety. The women learned to reframe fears (about childbirth, baby's health, etc.) through a lens of faith – believing that God is in control and present with them – which led to calmer minds ¹⁵ ¹⁶ .

Even if you don't have a formal program like that, you can create your own **"spiritual self-care" routine**: for example, **start each day by reading a Psalm and praying** over your specific concerns. Many expecting moms love Psalm 139 (as discussed) or Psalm 91 (God's protection), or Philippians 4. Journaling your prayers can also be cathartic – write down everything that's making you anxious and symbolically "hand it over" to God. **Breath-focused prayer** is another technique: breathe in slowly and pray, *"Lord, fill me with Your peace,"* then exhale slowly and pray, *"I cast my cares on You."* This combines prayer with the well-known benefits of deep breathing.

Speaking of **breathing**, simple deep-breathing exercises are a *proven* remedy for anxiety. When we're anxious, our breathing often becomes fast and shallow, which can exacerbate panic by reducing carbon dioxide balance. **Diaphragmatic breathing** (belly breathing) helps activate the body's calming parasympathetic response. A common method recommended by therapists is **box breathing** (also called square breathing) – inhale deeply for a count of 4, hold breath for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4, and repeat ¹⁷ . Visualize a steady square as you do it. Practicing this even **when you're not anxious** can train your body, so that during anxious moments your breathing reflex is to slow down. Christian moms sometimes adapt this to a rhythm of prayer – for example, inhale thinking *"Be still and know that I am God"* and exhale *"He is in control."* As ACOG (a leading obstetricians' organization) suggests, spending a few minutes twice a day on slow belly breathing or **mindful breathing** can significantly help manage stress ¹⁸ .

Meditation and mindfulness are also effective anxiety-relief tools – and Christians can engage in these by focusing our mind on **God's presence and Word**. Clinical research shows that regular meditation or mindfulness practice can lower anxiety and even improve aspects like concentration and sleep ¹⁹ ²⁰ . As believers, biblical meditation (pondering Scripture, practicing silence in God's presence) offers similar benefits with the added comfort of communion with God. You might try a daily 10-minute quiet time: sit comfortably, breathe slowly, and fix your thoughts on a comforting Scripture or an attribute of God (for example, His love, or imagining Jesus sitting with you). When your mind drifts to worries – and it will – gently bring it back to the chosen focus. Over time, this habit can "renew your mind" (Romans 12:2) and increase your overall sense of peace.

Key Bible Tip: Memorize a short verse like *"When I am afraid, I put my trust in You"* (Psalm 56:3). When panic starts, say it out loud while breathing deeply. There is power in speaking God's truth to interrupt anxious thoughts, much like Jesus quoting Scripture to combat fear and temptation.

2. Physical Activity and Exercise

"Get moving" – it's advice we hear often, and for good reason. **Regular physical activity is one of the most effective natural anti-anxiety remedies.** When you exercise, your body releases endorphins (natural mood lifters) and reduces stress hormones like cortisol. Exercise also improves circulation and sleep, which indirectly helps mood. A review of studies found that exercise significantly reduces anxiety symptoms, and it can even lower the risk of heart complications to which anxious individuals are sometimes prone ²¹ . For pregnant women specifically, moderate exercise is associated with benefits like lower risk of gestational diabetes and better overall pregnancy outcomes ²² .



According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), unless you have medical complications, it's generally safe and *recommended* to continue or start gentle exercise during pregnancy ²³. Always get your doctor's okay on your exercise plan, especially if you're high-risk or new to exercise. But for most, **pregnancy-safe activities** include walking, swimming, stationary cycling, and **prenatal yoga** or stretching classes ²⁴. Even a simple **daily walk outdoors** can do wonders. One Christian mom shared that when anxiety made her feel "stuck in her head," taking a 20-minute walk in the fresh air while listening to worship music really helped "reset" her mood. There's something profoundly calming about nature – consider the biblical imagery of "*green pastures*" and "*still waters*" that *restore the soul* (Psalm 23:2-3). A brisk walk in a park, admiring God's creation, can be a form of physical exercise *and* worship, lifting your spirits.

If you enjoyed more intense workouts pre-pregnancy, you might need to modify intensity and avoid risky sports, but you can still stay active. **Prenatal yoga** is worth highlighting: it combines stretching, deep breathing, and mindfulness, all of which are great for anxiety relief. A randomized trial even indicated that **yoga in pregnancy** (with proper modifications) helped reduce stress and anxiety levels for participants ²⁵. For Christians, participating in yoga purely as exercise need not conflict with faith; you can use the quiet stretches to pray or think of a verse, rather than any eastern spiritual elements. The key is to "**get back into your body,**" as therapists say – anxiety often keeps us in our swirling thoughts, so moving physically (stretching arms, doing light aerobics, etc.) grounds you in the present.

Quick tip: On days when motivation is low, remind yourself that *even 10 minutes* of movement is beneficial. As ACOG notes, "*Even just a few minutes of activity can be helpful*" ²⁶. Put on a favorite song and sway or dance gently – it might sound silly, but physical motion can release tension. And if fatigue or nausea make exercise hard now, simply do what you can; something is better than nothing. Always listen to your body and rest when needed.

3. Adequate Sleep and Rest

It's ironic that **anxiety causes insomnia** and yet lack of sleep makes anxiety worse – a vicious cycle. Pregnancy can further complicate sleep with physical discomfort, frequent bathroom trips, or vivid dreams. However, **prioritizing sleep** as much as possible is one of the best things you can do for your mental health. Research confirms that **improving sleep quality leads to better mental health outcomes**, including reduced anxiety and depression ²⁷ ²⁸. In practical terms, good sleep restores your brain's emotional balance; without it, the part of the brain that deals with fear (the amygdala) becomes overactive, potentially heightening anxiety responses.

To improve sleep, **practice good "sleep hygiene" habits**: - **Keep a consistent bedtime** and routine. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same times each day. A bedtime ritual (such as a warm bath, then reading a calming book or devotional, then prayer) can cue your body that it's time to wind down. - **Limit screens and bright lights at night**. The blue light from phones or tablets can interfere with melatonin (the sleep hormone). Aim to turn off screens at least 30 minutes (if not an hour) before bed ²⁹. Instead of scrolling, maybe journal or listen to soft music or an audiobook of the Bible. - **Avoid caffeine late in the day**, and be mindful of sugar intake in the evenings. Caffeine is a stimulant that can worsen anxiety and disrupt sleep (more on caffeine in a moment) ³⁰. - **Make your sleeping environment comfortable**. ACOG suggests keeping the bedroom dark, cool, and quiet, as much as possible ³¹. If you're having pregnancy-related discomfort, invest in a good pregnancy pillow for support. - **Don't clock-watch**. If you can't fall asleep within 20-30 minutes, get up and do something relaxing (like reading Psalms or sipping warm milk) under dim light until you feel drowsy, rather than lying there anxious about the time.



Above all, give yourself *grace*. Insomnia in pregnancy can be frustrating – you might worry, *“I’m going to be exhausted and anxious tomorrow if I don’t sleep!”* This worry itself fuels anxiety. Instead, remind yourself that **God can sustain you**. He “gives to His beloved sleep” (Psalm 127:2) as an expression of His care, and even on the nights when sleep is elusive, He will carry you through the next day. Some moms find it helpful to pray or repeat a Scripture while lying in bed; it redirects the mind from racing thoughts to resting in God. **Casting your cares on the Lord at bedtime** – perhaps saying, *“Lord, I release all today’s worries and tomorrow’s tasks to You now; grant me peaceful sleep”* – can allow you to drift off more easily.

If insomnia becomes chronic or severe, do mention it to your healthcare provider. Occasionally underlying issues (like iron deficiency or anxiety that might benefit from therapy/medication) need addressing. But these natural strategies, practiced consistently, often make a positive difference in your sleep quality and in turn, your anxiety levels.

4. Healthy Eating and Hydration

What does your **diet** have to do with anxiety? Quite a lot, it turns out. Emerging research in the field of **nutritional psychiatry** shows that the foods we eat can impact our brain chemistry and mood ³². During pregnancy, eating well is of course crucial for your baby’s development, but it’s also key for your own emotional well-being. **Blood sugar fluctuations** from a diet high in refined carbs and sugars can mimic or exacerbate anxiety symptoms (like jitteriness, irritability). On the other hand, a balanced diet helps stabilize mood. A *scoping review* in 2021 found that diets rich in **fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, omega-3 fatty acids, and minerals** were associated with **lower rates of anxiety**, whereas diets high in saturated fats and refined sugars were linked to higher anxiety levels ³³ ³⁴. Simply put, fueling your body with God-made, nutrient-dense foods can have a calming effect on your mind.

Some nutrients deserve special mention: - **Omega-3 fatty acids**, found in fish (like salmon) or flax/chia seeds, are known to support brain health and may help mood regulation. There’s some evidence that omega-3 supplements can reduce anxiety in general populations, and although results in pregnancy are mixed, it’s worth ensuring you get these through a prenatal vitamin or diet (following pregnancy fish intake guidelines). - **Magnesium** is a mineral that can have a relaxing effect on the nervous system. Legumes, nuts, leafy greens, and whole grains contain magnesium. Some pregnant women swear by magnesium supplements or epsom salt baths to help with anxiety and sleep (always clear supplements with your provider; high doses can cause diarrhea or interact with other conditions). - **Vitamin B6 and B12** support neurological function and mood. These are usually covered in prenatal vitamins, but eating proteins like poultry, eggs, and fortified cereals can boost them. - **Tryptophan-rich foods** (like turkey, nuts, seeds) are precursors to serotonin, a neurotransmitter that stabilizes mood.

In addition to *what* you eat, **how you eat** matters. Anxiety can sometimes suppress appetite or, conversely, lead to stress-eating. Try to maintain regular meal patterns to keep your blood sugar stable. Small, frequent meals with protein can prevent those shaky, anxious sensations that come from being overly hungry. Also, *listen to your gut* – literally. The gut-brain connection means gastrointestinal discomfort can heighten anxiety signals. If certain foods (spicy, heavy, etc.) upset your digestion and sleep, consider gentler alternatives, especially in the evening.

Hydration is another unsung hero in mental health. **Dehydration can actually manifest as increased anxiety**. A large cross-sectional study found that people who drank enough plain water had significantly lower risk of depression and anxiety compared to those who didn’t hydrate well ³⁵ ³⁶. When we’re even



mildly dehydrated, we might experience heart palpitations, lightheadedness, or irritability – sensations that can mimic anxiety or panic. Moreover, dehydration can raise your heart rate and blood pressure, adding physical stress. During pregnancy, your body's fluid needs are higher (water is needed to form amniotic fluid, support increased blood volume, etc.). **Aim for at least ~8-10 cups of water a day** (your urine should be pale yellow). Spread it out through the day to avoid overloading your bladder at night. If plain water is hard to consume, try infusing it with slices of lemon or berries for taste, or have caffeine-free herbal teas that are pregnancy-safe (more on herbal teas shortly).

By nourishing your body, you are also **nourishing your mind** and honoring the body God has given you. As 1 Corinthians 6:19 reminds us, our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit – caring for them with nutritious food and adequate water is a form of stewardship that can glorify God and strengthen you for the journey ahead.

(Caution: If you suspect any nutritional deficiencies or have dietary restrictions (like vegetarian/vegan), talk to your provider. They might check iron levels or suggest supplements. Iron-deficiency anemia, for example, can cause fatigue and anxiety-like symptoms and is common in pregnancy, but it's easily treated.)

5. Limiting Caffeine and Stimulants

If you're struggling with anxiety, **that extra cup of coffee might not be your friend**. Caffeine is a stimulant that can trigger or worsen anxiety in susceptible individuals. It revs up your nervous system – causing rapid heartbeat, jitteriness, and that “wired” feeling – which can both mimic panic symptoms and make you more prone to worry. Studies confirm that certain amounts of caffeine can induce panic attacks or increase anxiety, especially in people already prone to anxiety ³⁰ ³⁷. During pregnancy, doctors generally advise **capping caffeine at 200 mg per day** (roughly one 12 oz cup of coffee) for the baby's safety, but if you find even moderate caffeine makes you anxious, consider cutting back further or switching to decaf alternatives.

Be aware that **caffeine isn't only in coffee**: black and green tea, many sodas, and chocolate have it too (though in smaller amounts). Some over-the-counter headache or cold medicines even contain caffeine. Also, **energy drinks or shots** are *not recommended* in pregnancy, as they often contain high caffeine plus other stimulants. Instead, for a pick-me-up, ensure you're eating enough (a protein-rich snack can boost energy) and sleeping as well as you can. Gentle exercise can also energize you naturally. If it's the warm mug you crave, try **herbal teas** like peppermint or chamomile (in moderation and doctor-approved).

Chamomile tea is known for its calming properties, and although robust data in pregnancy is limited, a cup or two occasionally is generally considered safe and may take the edge off anxiety in the evening. One **natural remedy some mothers use is a warm cup of magnesium-enriched cocoa or milk** before bed – providing both a calcium/magnesium dose and a soothing ritual (just use non-caffeinated cocoa or carob).

By reducing caffeine, you might notice your baseline anxiety level goes down and your sleep improves, creating a positive cycle. It can be tough if you're used to that morning joe, but many women find the trade-off in calmness worth it. If you do decide to quit caffeine, **taper down slowly** to avoid withdrawal headaches. Perhaps mix decaf with regular and gradually increase the decaf ratio. And if you absolutely need a small caffeine boost, keep it earlier in the day.



6. Herbal Remedies and Aromatherapy (With Caution)

The appeal of “natural” remedies like **herbs and essential oils** is understandable – many people prefer to avoid medications if possible, especially during pregnancy. Some herbal approaches have been traditionally used to alleviate anxiety, but it’s crucial to approach this area *with wisdom and medical guidance*. **Not all “natural” substances are safe in pregnancy**, and “natural” doesn’t always mean effective either ³⁸. In fact, since supplements aren’t regulated as strictly as pharmaceuticals, their purity and dosage can vary, and there’s often a lack of research on their use in expectant mothers ³⁹. Always discuss any herb, supplement, or oil with your healthcare provider before using it.

That said, a few gentle options are commonly considered:

- **Lavender:** The scent of lavender has some of the strongest evidence for anxiety relief among essential oils. Studies (including one randomized trial in pregnant women) found that simply inhaling lavender aroma can reduce anxiety and improve mood ⁴⁰ ⁴¹. You can use a **lavender diffuser** in your room for 15-20 minutes, or put a couple drops of pure lavender oil on a tissue and breathe it in. (Avoid applying essential oils directly to your skin in pregnancy unless properly diluted and cleared by your doctor, as skin absorption effects are less studied.) Many moms also enjoy lavender-scented Epsom salt baths to relax muscles and mind – just ensure the water is warm, not overly hot, and have someone assist if you feel lightheaded.
- **Chamomile:** Known as a mild tranquilizer herb, chamomile tea in moderation (e.g. one cup at night) can be soothing and help with sleep. Small studies in non-pregnant populations suggest chamomile might reduce anxiety symptoms. The FDA considers chamomile likely safe in pregnancy when used in typical food amounts, but high concentrations (like essential oil) should be avoided. If you have pollen allergies (ragweed), use with caution as chamomile is in that family.
- **Lemon Balm:** This herb (a member of the mint family) has some evidence for easing anxiety and insomnia. It’s generally regarded as safe in pregnancy at moderate doses (like a cup of lemon balm tea), but again, consult your provider. Some naturopaths blend lemon balm with other herbs in teas for relaxation.
- **Bergamot:** Often used in aromatherapy (it gives Earl Grey tea its fragrance), bergamot essential oil has been noted to help anxiety when diffused ⁴² ⁴³. If you like the citrusy scent, it could be another option for your diffuser blend (it pairs well with lavender).

When using **aromatherapy**, remember:

- Never ingest essential oils in pregnancy, and *avoid* applying them neat on skin. Inhalation is the safest route.
- Some oils are unsafe in pregnancy (e.g. rosemary, clary sage, cinnamon, among others can potentially stimulate contractions or cause issues). Stick to ones known to be pregnancy-friendly (lavender, bergamot, chamomile in tea form, peppermint for nausea but not excess, etc.).
- Use in a well-ventilated area for short periods. More is not always better – a few drops go a long way.

It’s worth noting that **scientific evidence for herbal remedies is still limited**. For instance, there was excitement about **probiotics** (beneficial bacteria) as a treatment for anxiety and depression. While probiotics can help gut health, a recent randomized trial in pregnant women found *no significant anxiety improvement* from probiotic supplements compared to placebo ⁴⁴ ⁴⁵. In general, we lack large trials proving that most herbal supplements definitively relieve perinatal anxiety ³⁹ ⁴⁶. That doesn’t mean they have no benefit – many women anecdotally feel calmer with a cup of herbal tea or a whiff of lavender – but it does mean we should use them as **adjuncts, not primary treatments**.

Think of herbs/oils as one tool in your toolkit: they might take the edge off, especially when combined with the other strategies (prayer, breathing, exercise, etc.), but they’re rarely a cure-all. **Always inform your health provider** about any supplements or oils you use, to avoid interactions or risks. Even natural compounds can have side effects or affect pregnancy in unknown ways, so professional guidance is key.



7. Journaling, Mental Exercises, and “Worry Time”

The way we **think** has a powerful impact on anxiety. Often, anxiety is fed by racing thoughts, catastrophic “what if” scenarios, and a habit of mentally dwelling on fears. That’s why **therapy** – especially Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) – is so effective; it teaches one to challenge and change anxious thought patterns ⁴⁷. You don’t need to be a CBT expert to practice some helpful **mental exercises** on your own. Here are a few techniques:

- **Journaling:** Writing down your worries can be remarkably freeing. It gets the concerns out of your head and onto paper, where they often look more manageable. Harvard experts note that journaling helps you brainstorm solutions and reflect on your concerns more objectively ⁴⁸. Consider keeping a daily journal where each evening you spill out everything that made you anxious that day, and then, if you’re able, write a prayer surrendering those things to God. Some women maintain a **prayer journal** specifically during pregnancy, documenting both fears and how God provides through the journey – this can later become a testimony of God’s faithfulness.
- **Scheduled “Worry Time”:** This may sound odd, but scheduling a specific time to worry each day can prevent worry from intruding at all hours. The idea, recommended by therapists ⁴⁹ ⁵⁰, is to set aside (for example) 15 minutes in the late afternoon as “worry time.” During that window, you allow yourself to write down or think through whatever is bothering you. If anxious thoughts pop up at other times, you gently tell yourself, *“I’ll save that for my worry time.”* Many find that by the time their scheduled worry period arrives, those intrusive thoughts have lost some power – or they sometimes even forget what they were! This technique aligns with the biblical principle of **not worrying incessantly about tomorrow** (Matthew 6:34). You are essentially containing worry to a limited time, rather than carrying it perpetually. And after that time’s up, intentionally shift to another activity (preferably something comforting or engaging).
- **Thought Reframing and Truth Cards:** Anxiety often involves cognitive distortions – e.g. *“I’m going to be a terrible mother,” “Something bad is bound to happen,” “I can’t handle this.”* Counter these with truth. Some moms use **index cards** or phone notes to capture anxious thoughts and then write a rational or faith-filled response. For example: *Fearful thought:* “What if complications happen in labor?” → *Truth response:* “I will prepare as best I can, and I will trust God with the outcome, knowing He will not leave me. Many women have safe deliveries, and even if unexpected issues arise, God’s grace will help me through (Phil 4:13).” Training yourself to challenge catastrophic thoughts reduces their hold over you.
- **Grounding Techniques:** When you feel a panic attack or acute anxiety, **grounding** can help pull you back to the present reality. One simple grounding exercise is the “5-4-3-2-1” method: look around and name 5 things you see, 4 things you can touch/feel, 3 sounds you hear, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste. This engages your senses in the now, interrupting the mental whirlwind. As a Christian variation, you could also start naming **things you are grateful for** in that moment – gratitude is a potent anxiety antidote, as it shifts focus from fear to thankfulness. The Bible urges, *“in everything by prayer with thanksgiving present your requests to God”* (Phil 4:6, emphasis added). So when anxious, deliberately recall blessings or past instances of God’s provision. This practice not only grounds you but also builds faith that since God helped you before, He will again.



- **Affirmations from Scripture:** The world often promotes generic “positive affirmations.” Instead, try **scriptural affirmations**. These are short statements of biblical truth you speak over yourself. For example: *“God is with me and will strengthen me”* (from Isaiah 41:10), *“God’s plans for me and my child are for good”* (from Jeremiah 29:11), *“I am not given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind”* (2 Timothy 1:7). Speaking or writing these repeatedly can help rewire your thinking over time. Some women stick Post-it notes of such affirmations on their bathroom mirror or car dashboard for constant reminders.

By cultivating these mental and spiritual disciplines, you take thoughts captive (2 Cor 10:5) and make your mind more resilient against anxiety. **King David in the Psalms often engaged in this practice** – he would pour out his anxious feelings, then intentionally remind himself of who God is and what is true (*“Why, my soul, are you downcast?... Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him”* – Psalm 42:11). We can do the same, and experience the **“renewing of our mind”** promised in Romans 12:2.

8. Building a Support Network

Anxiety can make us feel isolated – like we’re the only one struggling while “everyone else” seems joyful and excited about pregnancy. But the truth is **you are not alone**, and you *shouldn’t* try to cope alone. **Community support** is a God-given source of strength. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 reminds us that two are better than one, for if one falls the other can lift them up. Galatians 6:2 urges, *“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”* Bringing trusted people into your experience will lighten the load on your heart.

Start with those closest: **talk to your spouse or partner** about what you’re feeling. Sometimes just sharing *“I’ve been really anxious lately”* and having a loved one listen empathetically can bring relief. They may not have solutions, but a hug, a prayer together, or them voicing confidence in you can remind you that you have a teammate in this journey. If you have close family or friends, let them know you’d appreciate their encouragement and prayers. You might be surprised how many of them will say, *“Oh, I went through that too,”* once you open up. Anxiety often drives people to put on a brave face, so by you speaking up, others may also feel safe to share and you all realize this is common and manageable together.

Consider joining an **expectant mothers’ group** or a **pregnancy support group** – especially one that aligns with your faith values. Many churches have moms’ meetups or ministries for expectant and new mothers. Being in a circle of women who are experiencing (or recently experienced) pregnancy can validate your feelings and provide practical tips. You can trade prayer requests, share verses that encourage you, and simply say “me too” when someone voices a worry you also have. Such fellowship combats the enemy’s tactic of isolating us in our fear. Even online, there are Christian pregnancy forums or virtual groups where you can find community if in-person options are limited. (*A caution: while online groups can be supportive, avoid any forums that devolve into fear-mongering or swapping horror stories – that won’t help your anxiety! Seek groups that are solution-focused and faith-filled.*)

Don’t hesitate to **lean on professional support** as well. A Christian counselor or therapist who understands both psychology and spirituality can be immensely helpful for persistent anxiety. They can provide you with tailored coping strategies and a safe space to process deeper fears (sometimes pregnancy brings up past trauma or new identity changes that are easier to handle with guidance). As ACOG emphasizes, **therapy is a first-line treatment for anxiety in pregnancy**, and there is no shame in using it ⁵¹. In fact, it’s a sign of



wisdom to use all resources God has provided – God often works through people and professionals to bring healing.

If you're already under a lot of stress (job, other kids, financial strain), think about **practical support** too. Is there someone who can help with errands or chores when you feel overwhelmed? Maybe a friend can come along to a doctor appointment if you're nervous. Sometimes hiring a doula for birth preparation can alleviate anxiety about labor by giving you more personalized education and support. Use your **"village"** – people are often glad to help an expectant mom, but they may not know what you need unless you ask.

Above all, **stay connected instead of withdrawing**. Anxiety might tell you to cancel plans or retreat into yourself, but gentle social interaction is often exactly what you need to break the cycle of anxious thoughts. A coffee date (decaf for you!) with a friend, attending church and receiving prayer, or simply sitting with family watching a movie can provide a mental break and remind you that you are loved. As Romans 12:15 says, we should "rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn" – allow others to rejoice with you in the baby's life and also to comfort you in your anxious moments. *You were never meant to carry your burdens alone.*

9. Relaxation Therapies: Massage, Stretching, and More

One of the **most pleasant remedies** for anxiety: **treat yourself to relaxation therapies!** Pregnancy is the perfect excuse to indulge in some pampering that also has therapeutic benefits. **Prenatal massage**, for example, is not just a luxury – it can measurably improve mental health. Research indicates that massage therapy during pregnancy can lower cortisol levels and increase serotonin, producing an anxiolytic (anxiety-reducing) effect. In one study, pregnant women who received regular prenatal massages had significantly **lower anxiety and depression scores**, reported less leg and back pain, and even had better birth outcomes (like lower incidence of prematurity) compared to those who didn't ⁵² ⁵³. Many certified prenatal massage therapists are trained to position you safely (usually side-lying or semi-reclined) and know which pressure points to avoid. Even a single session can provide hours (if not days) of relief as your muscle tension melts and your mind gets a chance to truly rest. If professional massage is out of reach, you can still ask your spouse for a gentle shoulder rub or use a foam roller/tennis ball at home to self-massage tight areas (like along your upper back against a wall). Some women love **reflexology** foot massages for relaxation – just ensure the reflexologist avoids certain trigger points on the ankles that some believe could stimulate contractions (this is mostly anecdotal but worth caution).

Other **body-based therapies** that can calm anxiety include: - **Stretching and Prenatal Yoga:** We touched on yoga in the exercise section, but even outside of a formal class, taking 10 minutes to gently stretch your neck, shoulders, hips, and legs can release stored tension. Pair stretches with deep breathing. There are Christian prenatal yoga videos available that incorporate prayer and worship music for those who prefer a faith-oriented approach. - **Acupuncture:** Some women find relief from anxiety and nausea through prenatal acupuncture. Research is mixed on its efficacy for anxiety, but it generally appears safe in pregnancy when done by a licensed acupuncturist familiar with obstetric care (they will avoid certain points contraindicated in pregnancy). If needles aren't your thing, **acupressure** wrist bands (marketed for motion sickness) can sometimes ease the physical jitters of anxiety or at least help with any concurrent nausea. - **Soothing baths:** A warm (not hot) bath can be incredibly relaxing both physically and emotionally. The warmth loosens tight muscles and signals your nervous system to calm down. Enhance the effect by adding pregnancy-safe bath salts or a few drops of lavender in a diffuser nearby, and play quiet worship music. Use this time to pray or just breathe. (Safety tip: avoid extremely hot water or hot tubs while pregnant, as



overheating is dangerous for the baby. Warm baths are fine, just not scalding.) - **Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR):** This is a technique where you systematically tense and then release each major muscle group in your body, one at a time. It can be done lying down in bed. For example, curl your toes and tense your feet for 5 seconds, then release for 10 seconds; tighten your calves for 5, release; work upward (thighs, then hips, belly – gently, don't over-tighten your abs – then hands, arms, shoulders, face). PMR helps you distinguish tension vs relaxation and often after a full-body round, you feel much less physically anxious.

Engaging in these relaxation techniques is not frivolous – it's actually *therapeutic self-care*. Secular sources encourage them, and we can also see them as part of God's design for how to cope with stress. Jesus Himself would withdraw to find rest and renewal in prayer (Luke 5:16), and He told His followers *"Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28). Sometimes that rest comes through spiritual means, but sometimes it's simply allowing your body to rest through a peaceful activity like a massage or bath, inviting Jesus into that moment. **Giving yourself permission to relax** is key – many moms feel guilty, thinking "I should be productive." But remember, when you care for your own well-being, you are also caring for your baby's environment (a calmer mom often means a calmer womb).

If feasible, schedule a regular weekly "relaxation hour" or "Sabbath rest" where you do one of these activities. It can become a treasured time you look forward to, knowing that *"the Lord is my shepherd, He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul"* (Psalm 23:1-3). Let that restoration happen as you physically and mentally unwind.

Embracing Modern Medicine When Needed

We have focused on natural remedies, but a balanced Christian perspective also **acknowledges the place for medical intervention** when appropriate. God has graciously provided advances in medicine and psychology, and utilizing them is not a lack of faith – it can be an act of stewardship and wisdom. If your anxiety becomes very intense, constant, or is not improving with lifestyle changes, **do not hesitate to seek professional medical help**. As it's often said, "pray *and* take the pill (if needed)!"

Therapy/Counseling: As noted, psychotherapy, particularly CBT, has strong evidence for treating anxiety and is considered a first-line treatment during pregnancy ⁵¹. A trained counselor can help you identify triggers and practice coping skills in a personalized way. Many women find even a few sessions of therapy during pregnancy equip them not only to manage anxiety now, but also to handle the emotional adjustments of motherhood later. There are therapists who specialize in perinatal mental health – your OB or midwife may refer you to one, or organizations like Postpartum Support International can help you find one. **There is zero shame** in needing counseling. Think of it like this: if you had gestational diabetes, you'd see a nutritionist or specialist; so for pregnancy anxiety, seeing a mental health specialist is equally sensible. The goal is a healthy mom and baby, and mental health is a part of that.

Medication: For some, therapy and natural methods might not be enough, especially if you have a pre-existing anxiety disorder or the anxiety is severely impacting your ability to function. In such cases, medication can be a Godsend. **Anti-anxiety medications in pregnancy** should be managed by a knowledgeable physician, but there are options considered relatively safe. The most commonly used are **SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors)** – these are technically antidepressants, but they also treat anxiety. Examples include sertraline (Zoloft) or citalopram (Celexa). Research indicates that most SSRIs do *not* significantly increase the risk of birth defects ⁵⁴ ⁵⁵. Thousands of women have taken them and had healthy babies. There can be some mild neonatal adaptation symptoms (baby might be a bit jittery or



fussy for a few days after birth), but these are typically short-lived and not dangerous ⁵⁶ ⁵⁷ . The risk of untreated severe anxiety (like high cortisol affecting the fetus, or mom not eating/sleeping) often outweighs the very small risks of the medication. **Benzodiazepines** (like Xanax or Ativan) are another class sometimes used for short-term relief or panic attacks; older studies raised concern about birth defects like cleft palate, but newer studies have not found a clear link when used alone ⁵⁸ ⁵⁹ . Still, benzos carry some risk of baby withdrawal after birth and sedation, so they are usually used sparingly and only if absolutely needed.

The decision to take medication is deeply personal. As a Christian, you might wrestle with it, perhaps fearing you “should just pray more” instead. But remember, **God works through doctors and medicine too**. One might recall how Paul advised Timothy to take a form of medicine (*“use a little wine for your stomach’s sake”* – 1 Tim 5:23) for his ailment. If you had a kidney infection, you’d likely take an antibiotic without feeling guilty; taking an anti-anxiety medication when indicated is no different. It doesn’t mean you’re not trusting God – you *are* trusting God by using the provision He’s made available, while still trusting Him for ultimate healing. Of course, pray for wisdom and peace about the choice, consult carefully with your OB and possibly a psychiatrist. And if you do go on medication, continue all the above natural remedies too – medication can take the edge off so you can better implement therapy, prayer, and healthy routines.

Safety Note: Never start or stop a medication without medical guidance. If you are already on an anxiety medication and become pregnant, *do not abruptly quit* without consulting your doctor – suddenly stopping some meds can cause withdrawal or rebound anxiety. Your physician will help you weigh risks vs benefits and decide whether to continue or switch to a safer alternative. A healthy, stable mom is the best gift you can give your baby, and sometimes a low-dose medication is part of achieving that stability ⁶⁰ ⁶¹ .

Finally, **remember that treating your anxiety is part of good prenatal care**. Jesus said the sick need a physician (Mark 2:17); there is no virtue in suffering needlessly if help is available. If your anxiety ever leads to *any* thoughts of self-harm or feeling life isn’t worth living (even fleetingly), treat it as an emergency – reach out immediately to your healthcare provider or a crisis line. Those moments can pass and *do not reflect reality*, but you might need urgent support to get through. You are precious to God and many others; never believe the lie that they’d be better off without you. **Help is always at hand.**

Real-World Example: Finding Peace in the Storm

To illustrate how these principles can come together, let’s consider a real-world example (a composite of common experiences). “Anna” is a 30-year-old Christian woman, 24 weeks pregnant with her first child. She has a history of mild anxiety, but during pregnancy it became much more intense – constant worry about the baby’s health, frequent panic episodes at night about the upcoming delivery, and feeling guilty that she wasn’t “enjoying” pregnancy as much as she expected. Her anxiety was scoring around 8 out of 10 most days, and it started affecting her appetite and concentration at work.

Anna decided to take a **multi-faceted approach**. She spoke with her OB, who screened her for thyroid issues (common in pregnancy) and ensured there wasn’t a physical cause to her heightened anxiety. The OB referred her to a counselor specializing in perinatal anxiety. Anna also confided in a women’s Bible study group at church, who began praying with her. One older mom in the group became a mentor figure Anna could call when she felt overwhelmed.



Working with her counselor, Anna learned some CBT techniques – identifying that a core fear was *“I won’t be a good mom”* and catastrophizing every scenario. They practiced reframing these thoughts (e.g., reminding herself that God would equip her to be the mother her baby needs, and recalling evidence that she is caring and responsible). The counselor also taught her **square breathing** and guided imagery. Anna made it a habit to do 5 minutes of deep breathing prayer each morning, picturing herself and the baby in God’s hands.

She also made lifestyle changes: cutting her coffee down to one small cup in the morning and replacing afternoon caffeine with herbal peppermint tea. She started walking for 30 minutes in the evenings with her husband, using that time to talk and decompress. On Saturdays, they attended a prenatal yoga class together (the studio welcomed partners) which became a fun bonding and relaxing activity. Anna found that on days she exercised, her sleep was better and her mood brighter.

Nighttime was still challenging, so she implemented a stricter wind-down routine: no news or social media after 8pm, a warm shower, then reading a devotional in bed. She kept a notepad by the bed to jot down any nagging worries that tried to wake her up (telling herself she’d address them tomorrow). She also played soft instrumental hymns to create a soothing environment. Over a few weeks, her insomnia improved and she was getting a solid 7+ hours most nights.

Anna also experimented with natural remedies: she used a diffuser with lavender oil in the evening during her prayer time, and found it really set a calm atmosphere. She enjoyed a cup of chamomile tea before bed as well. These little rituals became signals to her body that “it’s safe to relax now.”

By the time she reached 34 weeks, Anna reported her average anxiety levels dropped to about **3 out of 10** on most days – a huge improvement. In a journal, she noted that she hadn’t had a panic attack in over a month. On the rare tough day, she now had tools to cope: she’d call her mentor or ask her husband to pray with her, do some stretches, and remind herself of God’s promises. Objective measures echoed this improvement: a standardized anxiety screening her OB gave showed much milder scores than earlier in pregnancy. She carried to term and delivered a healthy baby girl. Postpartum, she continued her counseling and support group which helped navigate new baby anxieties too, and thankfully she did not develop postpartum depression or an anxiety disorder.

This example shows that **a combination of faith-driven and evidence-based strategies** can yield real results. It’s not always an overnight fix – it took Anna a few weeks to see marked improvement – but with consistency, the spiral of anxiety can be reversed. *“I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears”* (Psalm 34:4) became a reality for her, through both prayer and practical action.

Conclusion: Faith, Wisdom, and Peace for the Journey

Pregnancy is often described as a time of joy and anticipation, and indeed it is – but it’s also a time of vulnerability, change, and yes, anxiety. If you find yourself worrying about everything from your next ultrasound to how you’ll afford diapers, take heart: **God understands**. He designed you with a maternal instinct to care and protect, which can sometimes over-fire into anxiety. But He also offers you His presence and promises as an anchor. *“Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you”* (Psalm 55:22). Each day, practice handing those burdens over to Him.



In practical terms, **embrace the natural remedies and coping tools** that resonate with you: - Develop a rhythm of prayer and Scripture meditation to center your soul. - Move your body regularly to relieve tension and boost mood. - Prioritize rest and fuel your body with nourishing food and water. - Use calming techniques like breathing, journaling, aromatherapy, or massage to signal your body it's safe to relax. - Stay connected with supportive people and don't be afraid to seek counsel or professional help. - Set healthy boundaries on information (for example, limit how much you read scary internet stories) and instead fill your mind with what is true, noble, and praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8).

In doing these, you are not ignoring God – you are **working in tandem with Him**, caring for the body and mind He gave you while trusting Him with the outcomes beyond your control. Remember, **faith and action go hand in hand**. As you take active steps to manage anxiety, pray for God's grace to empower those steps. And when you've done what you can, **let go and let God handle the rest**. Jesus invites you, *"Come to me... and I will give you rest"* (Matt 11:28). There's a mysterious peace that comes when you've prayed about something and truly leave it in God's hands – it's the *peace that passes understanding*.

Finally, look ahead with hope. The same God who has been with you up to now will be with you through the delivery and beyond. He has chosen *you* to be this baby's mother, and He will equip you for every challenge. Many moms find that the anxieties that loomed so large in pregnancy fade when they hold their child and step into the role with God's help. But even if new worries come (parenting always brings some!), you now have a template for facing them: **spiritually, mentally, and physically**. Isaiah 26:3 promises, *"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You."* As you practice keeping your mind steadfast – through prayer, truth, and healthy habits – **God's perfect peace** will indeed become more and more a reality in your life.

Take a deep breath, momma – you've got this, and more importantly, *God's got you*. Embrace His joy and peace in this journey to motherhood.

***"Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."* – 1 Peter 5:7**

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Each of the above sources contributes evidence or guidance used in crafting the strategies in this article. By combining medical research with biblical principles, we can approach pregnancy anxiety in a holistic way that nurtures both body and spirit. Remember, always consult with your healthcare provider for personalized advice, especially when it comes to supplements or if considering medication. With God's help and some practical effort, **you can find peace and joy in your pregnancy journey.**

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