

The “baby blues” and postpartum depression

Bringing a new baby home from the hospital can be a wonderful and exciting time. Often times, it also be time when a woman has major changes in mood. Hormone changes, fatigue, stress from major changes, and lack of support can cause these mood swings. It is common for a new mom to be joyful one minute and crying the next. She may be irritable, anxious, confused, forgetful, and have headaches. These feelings can last up to 3 weeks after the baby is born.

How can I help myself during this wonderful and trying period?

- Avoid extreme fatigue. Sleep when the baby is sleeping. Let your partner or other support person feed the baby occasionally, so you can get extra rest.
- Concentrate on yourself and the baby. Let others help with housework, laundry, cooking, shopping, etc.
- Eat well. Drink plenty of fluids.
- Get out of the house every day. Go for a walk, meet a friend.
- Treat yourself to something you like to do.
- Share your feelings and frustrations with your partner or a close friend.

Remember that it is normal to feel resentful, overwhelmed, guilty, and confused for the first three weeks after childbirth.

When should I call my health care provider?

Call your health care provider if the feelings of sadness, anxiety, resentment or guilt last longer than 3 weeks and interfere with your ability to care for yourself and the baby.

You also need to call your health care provider if have any of the following signs and symptoms of depression or anxiety disorders:

- Inability to sleep or sleeping all the time
- loss of appetite
- feeling down most of the time
- feeling even the smallest tasks seem to take too much effort
- feeling very critical of yourself and others
- worrying constantly about the baby
- having thoughts of harming yourself or the baby.

What is the number to call?

You can call your health care provider, Triage (734) 764-8134 or Psychiatric Urgent Care (734) 936-5870.

We will refer you to a specialist in postpartum depression and anxiety disorders for evaluation and treatment. You don't have to struggle alone with these feelings. There are safe and effective treatments available.

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