

Is It Baby Blues, Postpartum Depression, or Grief?

What is Baby Blues?

Baby Blues are very common mood swings after the birth of a baby. It is important NOT to ignore the changes that are happening to your body. Some of the common symptoms of Baby Blues are:

- Weepiness or crying for no apparent reason
- Impatience
- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Anxiety
- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Sadness
- Mood changes
- Poor concentration

Many of these symptoms are signs of grief also. And they are NORMAL symptoms of someone who has just delivered a baby and someone who is going through the grief journey. Talking about these emotions, changes, and challenges is one of the best ways to cope with the “baby blues”.

What is Postpartum Depression/Mood Disorders?

Postpartum Mood Disorders and Depression are more severe than Baby Blues. Some of the common symptoms include:

- Fatigue
- Feeling sad, hopeless, and/or overwhelmed
- Trouble sleeping and eating
- Feelings of guilt and worthlessness
- Losing interest in things that you used to enjoy
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- **Thoughts of hurting yourself or others**
- Racing thoughts that you have difficulty controlling
- Constant worry
- Impending fear that something bad is going to happen
- Trouble sitting still and focusing
- Physical symptoms such as dizziness, hot flashes, and nausea

What do I do if I think I need help?

- Do not feel ashamed to ask for help, information, and support for yourself. You can call **POSTPARTUM SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL** at **1-800-944-4773** or visit **www.postpartum.net**
- Develop a support team for your family. Ask for help. Say YES when they offer.
- Take time for yourself.
- Talk to other families who have come through this.

Partners and Families

Partners and Families can help mom by:

- Reassuring her: this is not her fault; she is not alone; she will get better.
- Encouraging her to talk about her feelings and listen without judgment.
- Helping with housework before she asks you.
- Encouraging her to take time for herself. Breaks are a necessity; fatigue is a major contributing factor to worsening symptoms.
- Coming home when you say you will be home and only being gone when absolutely necessary (work, grocery store, pharmacy, etc.)
- Helping her reach out to others for support and treatment.
- Scheduling some dates with her.
- Offering simple affection and physical comfort, but be patient if she is not up for sex. It's normal for her to have a low sex drive with depression and grief. Rest and recovery will help to bring it back.

Dealing with her anger and irritability:

- Do what you can to make sure she eats regularly throughout the day, because low blood sugar results in a low mood and frustration. Have healthy and easy snacks on hand.
- Do your best to listen for the real request at the heart of her frustration. Reduce conflict by telling her, *"I know we can work this out. I am listening."*
- Keep the lines of communication open. Verbalize your feelings instead of distancing from her. It is helpful to take a break if your tempers are hot, but do get back to communicating.
- If she is expressing anger in such a way that you can't stay supportive, you might say something like, *"I want to listen to you. I know this is important, but I'm having a hard time because you're so mad at me. Can we take a break and talk about it later?"*
- Ask her how you can help right now. If she doesn't know, make some suggestions.

DADS/PARTNERS CAN GET POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION AND BABY BLUES TOO!

The information in this fact sheet was developed by:
POSTPARTUM SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL – www.postpartum.net

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