

Postpartum Mood Changes

The majority of new moms, 30 to 85 percent, get the “baby blues,” mild depression that usually last one to two weeks. Baby blues do not usually interfere with a mom’s ability to care for herself or baby. Up to 40 percent of new moms, however, get postpartum depression/anxiety. This condition can begin any time in the first year after baby’s birth. Symptoms include depression, withdrawal from family and friends and feelings of hopelessness. Postpartum depression/anxiety usually interferes with a mom’s ability to take care of herself and baby.

Guidelines for Self-care

Here are some tips to help new moms cope with this sleepless and hormonal time of life that comes with having a newborn.

Nourishment

You are what you eat. Eat at least five to six small snacks each day, preferably fruits, vegetables, protein and milk. Drink a lot of water.

Understanding

Learn, learn, learn! Read, ask questions. Listen to yourself. Believe in yourself.

Rest and relaxation

Sleep when you can. Even a short power nap will help. Practice relaxation exercises before you sleep. Listen to relaxing music. Add nice fragrances to your environment.

Spirituality

Try to think about a time in your life when you gathered strength from God, a person, book, painting, CD or movie. Remember those moments and repeat them when possible. Write, read, pray, sing!

Exercise

Lie in bed, on the floor or in the kitchen and perform simple exercises. Tense and relax your muscles. Move slowly and stretch. Be kind to yourself.

Socialize

Find ways to share your thoughts and ideas with people you trust. Do something with a friend to give your mind a break.

Adopted from “Women’s Moods: What Every Woman Must Know about Hormones,” Sichel & Driscoll, 2000