

What to do if you think you may be experiencing postnatal anxiety and/or depression

Establishing a support network of trusted family, friends and healthcare professionals is important. Postnatal mental health conditions are nothing to be ashamed of. Being open and honest about how you are feeling is a vital step in managing anxiety and depression.

It is important to seek help, so that the negative impact of postnatal anxiety and depression on yourself, your baby and family is reduced.

There are a range of healthcare professionals and treatments available to cope with and manage postnatal mental health conditions. Support counselling, psychological and medical treatments are all readily available within the community. If you feel as if you may be experiencing postnatal anxiety and/or depression, or if trusted family or friends express concern about your mental health and wellbeing, seek assistance without delay.

How and where to get help

- Confide in your support network, trusted family and friends
- Consult your healthcare provider
- Talk with your Maternal and Child Health Nurse
- Take time out for yourself, promote self-care and ask for help

Resources

PANDA

Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia

PH: 1300 726 306

www.panda.org.au

Beyond Blue

PH: 1300 224 636

www.healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au

COPE

Centre of Perinatal Excellence

www.cope.org.au

Lifeline (24 hours)

PH: 13 11 14

If you feel you are unsafe or in the event of a medical emergency, call 000 without delay

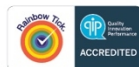
peninsulahealth.org.au



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Disclaimer: The information contained in the brochure is intended to support, not replace, discussion with your doctor or health care professionals.

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Postnatal Mental Health

Common signs & symptoms of anxiety and depression, how and where to get help

IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, PLEASE CALL 000 IMMEDIATELY

IF YOU REQUIRE ASSISTANCE, CONTACT PENINSULA HEALTH'S MENTAL HEALTH TRIAGE LINE ON 1300 792 977



Postnatal mental health conditions

Depression and anxiety can affect anyone at any time, but some women may have an increased risk of experiencing mental health conditions following the birth of a baby.

This brochure outlines causes, common signs and symptoms as well as supports and resources associated with postnatal mental health conditions, and how and where to get help.

What can increase the risk of postnatal anxiety and depression?

- Pre-existing mental health conditions
- Change in sleep patterns
- Hormonal fluctuations
- Recovery from a difficult childbirth
- Pain and discomfort
- Medications
- Lifestyle changes
- Pressure associated with feeding and settling a baby



Common signs and symptoms of postnatal anxiety

Postnatal anxiety can be mild, moderate or severe and symptoms can occur immediately after birth or appear gradually in the weeks or months of the first year after birth. Postnatal anxiety is common and affects 1 in 5 women.

The most common signs and symptoms of postnatal anxiety can include but are not limited to:

- Worrying thoughts, such as concerns that there may be something wrong with your baby
- Episodes of extreme fear and panic that take over and cause you to feel out of control
- Feelings of restlessness and irritability, feeling on edge
- Feelings of failure and inadequacy
- Mood swings
- Tense muscles and tightness in the chest
- Experiencing compulsions or the need to carry out certain rituals
- Losing interest in intimacy
- Having harmful thoughts about your baby

Common signs and symptoms of postnatal depression

Postnatal depression (PND) is a common condition that affects 1 in 7 women after the birth of their baby. Postnatal depression can be debilitating and affect your ability to cope with the demands of a new baby.

PND can occur any time from the first few weeks to 12 months post birth.

The most common signs and symptoms of PND can include but are not limited to:

- Feeling low or numb
- Loss of confidence
- Feeling helpless or worthless
- Feeling emotional, angry, irritable or resentful
- Sleep changes, insomnia or extreme fatigue
- Appetite changes, weight loss or gain
- Lack of interest and energy, loss of enjoyment in normal activities
- Difficult concentrating, indecisiveness, inability to think clearly
- Feelings of isolation and/or disconnection
- Thoughts of harming yourself, your baby and/or other children