

The Wellness Exchange



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Understanding Postpartum Depression



The Baby Blues

Many women experience mood swings after having a baby; they may feel happy one minute and then sad the next. New moms may experience difficulty eating, sleeping, and also feel a little depressed. These are symptoms of the “baby blues,” a condition that affects 50-80% of women. The symptoms appear within a few days of delivery and typically subside after 7-10 days without assistance. If it takes longer to feel better, then a woman may be diagnosed with postpartum depression.

Postpartum Depression

Postpartum Depression is an illness which can be treated with therapy and medication. It affects 10-15% of women any time from a month to a year after childbirth.

Symptoms include:

- Feeling sad or down often
- Frequent crying or tearfulness
- Feeling restless, irritable or anxious
- Loss of interest or pleasure in life
- Loss of appetite
- Less energy and motivation
- Difficulty sleeping, including trouble falling asleep, staying asleep or sleeping more than usual
- Feeling worthless, hopeless or guilty
- Unexplained weight loss or gain
- Feeling like life isn't worth living
- Showing little interest in her baby

Who Has Postpartum Depression?

Postpartum Depression is more likely if you have had any of the following:

- Previous Postpartum Depression
- Depression not related to pregnancy
- Severe Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)
- A difficult or very stressful marriage or relationship
- Few family members or friends to talk to or depend on
- Stressful life events during pregnancy or after childbirth (such as as severe illness during pregnancy, premature birth or a difficult delivery)



What Causes Postpartum Depression?

The specific cause of postpartum depression is not known. Researchers think that the dramatic changes in hormone levels that occur during and after pregnancy may produce chemical changes in the brain. It is thought that these changes play a part in causing the depression. Childbirth is also a factor that can contribute to the depression. Childbirth is a major life event and the additional responsibilities to involved in caring for a baby, it may affect a women's risk of getting postpartum depression.



Treatment

Similar to many other illnesses, postpartum depression can be treated successfully with medication and therapy. Women have showed great improvement when treated with a combination of antidepressant medication and talk therapy. In addition, depending on the medication taken, some women may be able to continue breast feeding. Talk with your doctor about the treatment that is right for you.

Ask For Help

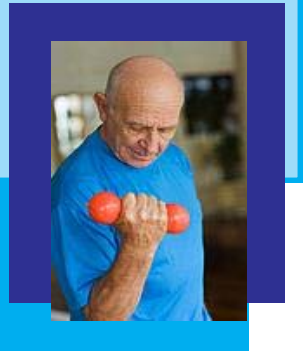
It is ok to feel overwhelmed. You are not expected to be “supermom” so do not be afraid to ask for help.

- Find someone to talk to about your feelings
- Ask a friend or family member for help with child care, household chores and errands
- Find a support group in your area
- Talk to your doctor

To find additional information about postpartum depression, please visit the following websites:

- <http://familydoctor.org>
- <http://newsinhealth.nih.gov>
- <http://americanpregnancy.org>

June is Men's Health Month



According to the Center for Disease Control, men live an average of 6 years less than women. This may be due to the fact that women are 100% more likely to attend annual check-ups and participate in preventative health practices. When it comes to health and wellness, ignorance is not bliss.

Men in America are more likely to die of heart disease, strokes, most cancers, accidents, homicides, suicides and are in overall poorer health than women. Many of these health problems are avoidable by improving diet and exercise habits, but statistically men are less likely to practice healthy lifestyles than women.

Adopting healthy behaviors and taking precautions can help men live longer and with less complications. Try some of these tips!



Eat Healthy

What you eat and drink, as well as what you do not eat and drink can certainly make a difference in your health. Try to get 7-9 servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Choose whole grains rather than white starches, and avoid foods that are high in saturated fat to reduce your risk for cancer and other chronic conditions.

Maintain a Healthy Weight

Obesity is an epidemic in America today and it may be getting worse. People who are overweight and obese are at a greater risk for heart disease, diabetes, and stroke. Eat better, get more exercise, and talk to your health care provider about a healthy weight for you.

Get Regular Exercise

More than 50% of men and women in America do not get enough exercise. It is recommended that we get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week. It does not take a lot of time or money but it does take commitment. Start by setting realistic goals and don't over do it. You can develop a routine or do something new each day. Keep it fun and diverse like dancing, hiking, biking, gardening, or swimming.

Get Routine Exams and Screenings

Based on your age, health history and lifestyle, your health care provider can determine how often you need to be screened for certain diseases and conditions. These include high blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, sexually transmitted diseases, and cancer of the skin, colon, and prostate. Take advantage of free screenings provided by community resources in your area.



Be Smoke Free

Complications associated with smoking tobacco include lung disease and cancer. Second hand smoke, the smoke you inhale from others, also affects your health. If you smoke, quit today! Helplines, programs, counseling, medications and other forms of support are available to help you quit.

Manage Stress

Stress from home, work, and other situations can pose as a health threat, so protect your mental and physical health by engaging in activities that help you manage your stress. Assess your personal stress level and try to balance obligations to your family and your employer.

Be Safe and Protect Yourself

Safety and protecting yourself involves every aspect of your life: fastening seat belts, applying sunscreen, wearing helmets, and having smoke detectors are some examples. It entails everything from washing your hands to having healthy relationships. Men at work die most frequently from motor vehicle incidents, machine-related injuries, homicides, and falls. Take steps to protect yourself and others wherever you are.

Be Good to Yourself

Health is not just the absence of disease, it is a lifestyle. It's important to take time and be good to yourself, so get recommended amounts of sleep, relax after a hard day, and regularly enjoy a hobby. Take steps to balance home, work and play, and make healthy living a part of your life!

Did You Know?

- 65% of men are physically inactive, with one in five males doing less than 30 continuous minutes of physical activity every week.
- Seven out of every eight men have at least one risk factor for heart disease and stroke.
- Despite the fact that testicular cancer is the most common cancer in men between the ages of 15 and 44, a whopping 87% of men never perform self-exams.

www.menshealthnetwork.org