

It's Not Always Easy! Your Guide to Mood Changes When Pregnant, Postpartum or Parenting

INFORMATION BOOKLET



**Positive Mental Health:
Important for You, Your Baby and Family**

Table of Contents

What is a Perinatal Mood Disorder (PMD)?	1
What places me at risk?	2
Symptoms to watch for	3
Does my mood affect my baby?.....	4
When self-care is not enough.....	5
Local Supports.....	6
Online Resources.....	7
References.....	8

What is a Perinatal Mood Disorder (PMD)?

Bringing a baby into the world can be a delightful experience, but pregnancy and the time following birth presents many challenges for families. PMD is a mental illness that affects a person's mood – the way we feel. Mood impacts the way we think about ourselves, relate to others, and interact with the world around us. Changes in mood may start during pregnancy or at any time up to a year after the birth of a baby.

It is important to speak to your health care provider about your mental health and well-being during prenatal and postnatal visits.

Who Does it Affect?

PMD can affect anyone! Although it is more common in moms (up to 20% or 1 in 5), research indicates that 10% or 1 in 10 dads/partners and 25% or 1 in 4 adoptive parents are affected too, leaving them feel unable to cope.¹

- Symptoms range from mild to severe and can vary greatly
- Typically, family members are the first to notice symptoms
- Family plays a vital role in support, treatment and recovery

What is Considered ‘Normal’ Related to Mood?

Low energy, changes in appetite or sleep can be normal in pregnancy/postpartum and these symptoms may be confused with depression. Up to 80% of mothers will be emotional, irritable and worried for up to 10 days after delivery. These “baby blues” are mild and do not usually need treatment but can lead to more severe symptoms.

If symptoms last longer than two weeks, talk to your health care provider.

What Places Me at Risk?

The exact cause of perinatal mood disorder(s) is not known, although some people are more likely to be affected.

Some risk factors include:

- History of depression or anxiety
- Stopped medication used to treat depression or anxiety
- Previous perinatal mood disorder (PMD)
- Family history of mental illness
- History of severe premenstrual syndrome (PMS)
- Recent stressful life events
- Previous miscarriage(s), loss or infertility
- Relationship conflict
- High expectations of birth or motherhood
- Unexpected, disappointing or traumatic birth experience
- Sleep deprivation
- Fussy baby
- Lack of help or support
- Being new to Canada
- Being a teen/young mom
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Preterm birth
- Baby with disability or special needs
- Difficulty with breastfeeding or abrupt weaning
- History of trauma, abuse, or violence

***It is important to remember...
This is not your fault, you are not
alone – Ask for help!***

Symptoms to Watch For?

If you are pregnant or had a baby in the past year and have any of the following concerns, you may have a perinatal mood disorder. Moms, dads and partners, ask yourself the following:

Do I often feel:

- A lack of interest or pleasure in activities I used to enjoy
- Disconnected from my baby
- Very tired
- Sad and tearful
- Anxious or worried
- Scared
- Guilty and ashamed
- Angry, restless or irritable
- Hopeless or frustrated
- Isolated or alone

If symptoms last longer than two weeks, talk to your health care provider.

Am I having trouble:

- Sleeping or eating
- Concentrating
- Taking care of myself or baby
- Enjoying time with my baby or family
- Coping with day-to-day tasks
- Breastfeeding
- Dealing with scary or intrusive thoughts or dreams

See your health care provider right away if you are having thoughts of suicide or harming yourself or your baby.

Does My Mood Affect the Baby?

Infants are highly sensitive to their parent's emotions. An infant's environment can influence their development, ability to learn, their physical and mental health and behavior throughout life.³

Have a Realistic Attitude

Most parents and soon-to-be parents have high expectations of how things should be. It is important to remember there are no perfect babies, no perfect children and no perfect parents.

Taking Care of Yourself

Mood disorders affect your body, mind, thinking, emotions, behaviours, and habits. Medicine, counselling, support groups, and self-help strategies, or a combination of these strategies can help to effectively treat your mood.

As a first step, there are some simple, basic changes that you can make that are all important ways to care for your health and mental well-being:⁴

Self-Care

in Pregnancy and Postpartum

- N**utrition: Eat nutritious foods throughout the day
- E**xercise: Get regular exercise to reduce stress
- S**leep & Rest: Get a good night sleep
- T**ime for Self: Make time for yourself
- S**upport: Build a support network and ask for help

When Self-Care Is Not Enough...

Self-care changes can help but many people need counselling, medications or a lot of support to be able to take the initial steps to make changes. A perinatal mood disorder is a treatable illness and with proper treatment you can function in all areas of your life.

Treatment options may include:

A. Psychotherapy/Counselling

Individual, couple, or group interpersonal therapy (IPT) or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) are highly effective in treating perinatal mood disorders.

B. Medications

You can take certain medications when pregnant and while breastfeeding. Talk to your health care provider about what is right for you. Antidepressants are not addictive.

C. Support

Many community-based organizations provide a place for new families to meet others and create new forms of support.

Be patient, you will get better! It takes time for recovery. Remember, there is hope.

Local Supports

- Library programs
- EarlyON Child and Family Centre
- Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP)
- Mothering support groups (call contact number on back of booklet for details)
- Metis Nation of Ontario
- Native Friendship Centre or Women's Association

Most women need the support of their health care provider, family, and friends to seek assistance for a mental health disorder.

Where to Get Help

- Your primary health care provider
- Call Health Connection at Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520
- Your local mental health agency
- Call **Ontario 2-1-1** - a free, confidential, province-wide helpline that simplifies finding support and community services for Ontario residents.
- North Simcoe Muskoka Walk-In Counselling Clinic (Free) 1-888-726-2503 or www.nsmwalkincounselling.ca

For Immediate Assistance

- Call 9-1-1
- Visit your local hospital emergency department (ER)
Call the Mental Health Crisis line at 705-728-5044 or 1-888-893-8333

Online Resources

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit -

<http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/JFY/ParentsandParentsToBe.aspx>

OSMH Patient Education Library- Parents and Parents-To-Be -

<http://osmh.libguides.com/c.php?g=435565&p=4273511>

Best Start Resource Centre - Managing Depression Workbook

Mother Matters (online-support group) -

<http://www.womenscollegehospital.ca/programs-and-services/mental-health/Mother-Matters>

Postpartum Support International - <http://www.postpartum.net/>

Canadian Postpartum Depression Support Network

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PPDSupportCanada/>

Life With A Baby – Real Parents, Real Challenges, Real Help!

<http://www.lifewithababy.com/> (Simcoe Chapter)

New Dad Manual - www.newdadmanual.ca

Dad Central - <http://www.dadcentral.ca/>

Dad Central Ontario - <https://www.facebook.com/dadcentralontario/>

Mood Disorder Association of Ontario (MDAO)

Barrie Chapter - <http://www.mooddorders.ca/event/barrie-peer-support-group-mood-disorders-self-help-group-of-barrie>

Barrie (family support) - <http://www.mooddorders.ca/event/barrie-family-support-barrie-family-and-friends-health-support-group>

Orillia Chapter – <http://www.mooddorders.ca/event/orillia-peer-support-group-orillia-damd-self-help-group>

Midland Chapter - <http://www.mooddorders.ca/event/midland-peer-support-group-dmd-group-of-midlandpenetang>

References

1. Healthy Human Development Table. (2016). Perinatal Mental Health and Public Health: Evidence Summary from the Healthy Human Development Table. Toronto, ON: Author.
2. Best Start Resource Centre. (2017). Life with a new baby is not always what you expect – Postpartum mood disorders. Retrieved from http://en.beststart.org/sites/en.healthnexus.ca/files/resources/dispalys/PPMD_roll_up_display_08_eng.pdf
3. Infant Mental Health Promotion, The Hospital for Sick Children. (2015). Supporting infant mental health in Simcoe County: A collaborative approach to embedding the science of infant mental health and enhancing infant mental health services. Toronto: The Hospital for Sick Children.
4. Haring, M., Smith, J., Bodnar, D., & Ryan, D. (2011). The NEST-S program. In coping with depression during pregnancy and following the birth (pp 3: 12-30). British Columbia: BC Mental Health and Addiction Services.



**Compiled by the North Simcoe Muskoka Perinatal
Mood Disorder Coalition January 2017.**
**The resources in this pamphlet are provided for your convenience
and are not intended as an endorsement or an affiliation by the Coalition**



**For further information please contact the PMD Community
Development Coordinator within Community Mental Health
Services within OSMH at 705-327-9122**