

**How can I help myself?**

There are a number of things you can do to help improve your feelings of wellbeing:

- Talk to your partner, family, friends and close colleagues about your thoughts and feelings. As hard as that might feel it is one of the best things you can do
- Eating a healthy diet, exercising and getting enough sleep where possible can have a positive effect on mood and sense of wellbeing
- Make time for yourself to do the things you enjoy: hobbies, exercise, or social activities, even an hour here or there can make a difference
- Your baby still needs you: give them skin to skin contact, cuddles and baths, take your baby for a walk or play with them
- Don't try to be 'supermum' or 'superdad' - don't try to do everything at once and take one day at a time
- Don't feel guilty about your feelings. It's what you do that matters!

**What if I need more support?**

Remember, this is not your fault. Postnatal depression can affect both mothers and fathers, from any background, for any reason. It's nothing to be ashamed of or embarrassed about. The most important thing you can do is to recognise it and seek support.

**If you have concerns about your own or your partner's mental health, you can seek help and support from your Health Visitor, GP or Let's Talk.**

**Health Visitors**

**Tel: 01482 336634**

**Email: [hull.cypcommunityservices@nhs.net](mailto:hull.cypcommunityservices@nhs.net)**

**Let's Talk**

**Tel: 01482 247111**

**[www.letstalkhull.co.uk](http://www.letstalkhull.co.uk)**

**[www.chcpcic.org.uk](http://www.chcpcic.org.uk)**

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Health Visitor led 0-11 Team

## Postnatal Depression Support for Mums and Dads



up to **1 in 5** new mums suffer from post-natal depression

**1 in 10** new dads suffer from post-natal depression

## What is postnatal depression (PND)?

Unlike the "baby blues", postnatal depression can persist for months if left untreated. It causes severe feelings of low mood and increased anxiety and in a minority of cases can become a long-term problem. If not treated it can cause relationship difficulties as well as difficulties relating to your baby.

Both mothers and fathers can suffer from postnatal depression.

**122,000**  
babies living with a parent who has a mental illness



**1 in 8**

partners experience mental health problems

### Baby Brain...

Mums and dads brains behave in exactly the same way in response to their baby's needs. Dads can support and nurture just as well



## What causes postnatal depression?

There is no single answer as to why some new parents are affected and not others. Some possible causes include:

- **Previous history:** you may have had other mental health problems such as depression, OCD or post-traumatic stress disorder earlier in life or during the pregnancy
- **Trauma during birth:** your experience of pregnancy and childbirth may have been different to your expectations and not gone to plan
- **Pressure:** you may be under pressure at work or home, combined with a lack of sleep and a change in routine
- **Relationships:** as a new parent you may experience a strain on your relationship while adjusting to your new role. You are also more likely to suffer from depression if your partner is also depressed
- **Lack of support:** If you don't have close family or friends to support you, you may feel isolated and unable to share your feelings

**20% of women and 10% of men**

Experience mental ill health in the perinatal period (through pregnancy, birth and beyond)

### Did you know...

Unborn babies can respond when you talk to them, as babies recognise familiar voices even before they are born



### From 26 weeks

old in the womb, your baby will respond to you

## Skin to Skin Contact

Being held on mum's or dad's chest has the same effect on the baby and helps with bonding



**38%**

of new dads are concerned about their mental health

3-6 months after birth the risk of depression is at its highest for dads

Fathers can also suffer from PND as well as mothers

New fathers' depression rates are double the national average for men in the same age group



Within 15 minutes of holding a baby, fathers experience raised levels of hormones associated with tolerance/trust (oxytocin) brooding/bonding (prolactin) and sensitivity to infants (cortisol)

**1/10** new fathers suffer from PND

Depression in pregnancy is as common as depression after birth



**4 in 10** who have previously experienced postnatal depression will do so again

Between 1 and 2 in 1000 women will experience postpartum psychosis. Women with bipolar disorder are at particular risk of postpartum psychosis

**1 in 5** new mothers suffer from post-natal depression



**3-5%**

of mothers are effected by severe postnatal depression

**30-80%** of new mothers experience the milder 'baby blues'

## What should I look out for?

### Dads

- Feeling low, despondent or detached
- Lack of joy in life
- Trouble sleeping, feeling tired or run down
- Difficulty bonding with your baby
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Loss of libido
- Not recognising feelings of being unable to cope
- Having obsessive or irrational thoughts
- Having an overpowering anxiety
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
- Being unusually irritable, hostile or angry
- Self-neglect - harmful behaviours such as excessive smoking, drinking, gambling or drug use
- Working excessively long hours

### Mums

- Feeling low, despondent or detached
- Lack of joy in life
- Feeling helpless or wanting to cry
- Trouble sleeping, feeling tired or run down
- Difficulty bonding with your baby
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Loss of libido
- Feelings of inadequacy and self-blame, being unable to cope
- Having obsessive or irrational thoughts
- Having an overpowering anxiety
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
- Long term self-neglect