

# Understanding postnatal depression

**Postnatal depression (PND) affects almost 1 in 10 mothers and fathers. Having PND does not mean that you do not care about your baby or that you are an unfit parent. It is an illness, just as serious as any other type of depression. The good news is that it is treatable. If you think you may have PND, seek support straight away to avoid your symptoms worsening.**

Here we explain more about the condition, what the signs to look out for are, and we outline tips for coping with the symptoms.



## What is postnatal depression?

It can be quite common for parents to feel down after birth. Commonly referred to as the 'baby blues', these feelings can fade within a few weeks. However, PND is a sustained feeling of depression that does not go away. It may not appear until your baby is at least a few weeks old; in many cases, PND may not be fully apparent for as long as six months.

## How do I know if I have PND?

Most symptoms of PND start during the first year after birth. Symptoms of PND can include:

- + Feeling sad
- + Tearfulness
- + Feeling unable to cope
- + Finding it difficult to concentrate
- + Lack of interest in the world around you
- + Loss of interest in the things that used to give you pleasure
- + Tiredness and difficulty sleeping
- + Lack of energy
- + Appetite issues - loss of appetite or comfort eating
- + Anxiety and panic
- + Tension



## Top tips to help you to deal with PND

Here's an outline of ways to deal with PND:

- + **Prioritise self-care** - a common mistake during the postnatal period is to forget or neglect self-care. However, it is sometimes necessary to put yourself first, as this enables you to cope with the demands of a new baby
- + **Be gentle with yourself** - try not to put too much pressure on yourself to live up to an idealised image of parenthood. Set realistic expectations and recognise what you're doing well. Don't beat yourself up for struggling at times and try to avoid comparing yourself to other parents. It's totally normal to be faced with difficulties such as sleepless nights, constant nappy changing, feeding difficulties, and mounting housework
- + **Ask for support** - the more support you enlist from family and friends in the postnatal period, the better you can cope with pressure. Remember that asking for help is a strength, not a weakness
- + **Remember that this is temporary** - this feeling will not last forever, so temporary problems require temporary solutions. Your life will be different once your baby starts to grow and you will enter new phases together



## Getting professional help for postnatal depression

If you are struggling to cope with PND, talk to your GP. You can also contact Priory directly to discuss your needs, along with the available recommended options for supporting you to recovery.

Priory works with worldwide leading mental health professionals and our proven record of helping people to get their lives back on track is unrivalled.

For more information, please contact us by:

**Telephone: 0800 840 3219**

**Email: [info@priorygroup.com](mailto:info@priorygroup.com)**

Read more about PND treatment by scanning the QR code.

