

What to look for

- Mood swings
- Feelings of inadequacy, hopelessness, anger, guilt
- Loss of interest in baby
- Anxiety and sadness
- Extended lack of interest in sex
- Loss of appetite
- Loss of confidence
- Inability to sleep

Knowing it could have an effect on our baby really worried me too.

Steven

Things dads can do

Talk openly with your partner, especially if you suspect Postnatal Depression.

Listen to and accept your partner's feelings, try to understand and anticipate her needs.

Be supportive and reassure your partner that you will be there for her and that she will get well.

Look after your baby when you can. Your baby will continue to need a lot of love and attention at this time.

Encourage your partner to join a support group or speak to another woman who has experienced PND.

Your help around the home and with your baby is important. Remember that there is a difference between being helpful and taking over.

Family and friends are often able to give you practical support.

Seek assistance from a professional who you both trust such as your GP, child health nurse, community health centre, parenting line.

Dad's needs are important

Supporting a person with PND can be stressful and lonely and can sometimes leave you feeling down and frustrated.

Take a break every now and then and do something for yourself.

Your partner and baby need you to be strong and well. It is important for you to seek help if you find the going tough, so that you don't become run down.

Where to get help

Your family GP is central to the diagnosis and treatment of PND. Additional support is available from:

- Child and Family Health Centres
- Parenting Centres
- Mother and Baby Units
- Post Natal Support Groups

Websites to visit:

- www.beyondblue.org.au/postnataldepression/
- www.calvarytas.com.au
- www.goodbeginnings.net.au
- www.cyh.com

This brochure was developed through a series of forums with dads, mums and family based services. An initiative of Good Beginnings Australia and Calvary Health Care Tasmania with support from Johnson & Johnson. Re-developed with the assistance of True North Parenting.



Children grow from good beginnings

Johnson & Johnson



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Dads

can make a difference to
Post Natal Depression

I couldn't take it away, but there was a lot I could do to make it easier.

Sam





Dad, your role is vital in helping to recognise the early signs of Postnatal Depression (PND) and in giving the support and understanding that your partner needs to become well again.

Things to know about PND

- PND is a form of depression experienced by mothers which impacts on all members of your family.
- PND can occur any time, but is most common in the first few months after your baby is born, and may also occur during pregnancy.
- Figures vary, but show that from 1 in 7 to 1 in 10 mothers will suffer from PND regardless of their age, culture, or family income.
- PND can have an effect on the emotional development of your baby.
- PND should not be confused with the "Baby Blues" which affects many mothers in the early days of parenting and does not last long.
- PND will affect women in varying degrees. Treatment needs to be tailored to the mother's needs and may be as simple as someone to talk to about it.
- There is no "quick fix" for PND. All mothers with PND benefit from the understanding of family, friends and parenting support services.

It was hard, but we're O.K. now.

Ross

Identifying PND early makes a difference

Many of the signs of PND are things you and your partner will naturally experience as a part of your early parenting and are not cause for concern.

It is when these things continue over some time, or are severe, that there can be a problem.

If you have any concerns seek help early as, with other forms of depression, the earlier PND is identified, the easier it is to treat and overcome.

PND is not a condition to be embarrassed or ashamed about. Bringing it out in the open is the best way to deal with it.

I tried to paper over the cracks and cover up the holes, but it didn't work. We should have got help sooner.

Robert

Situations that can contribute to PND

- Depression during pregnancy
- Previous history of depression
- Major stressful life events e.g. moving house, a death in the family, loss of income, financial hardship
- Lack of support or social isolation
- Difficult birth
- Unmet expectations regarding breastfeeding, bonding, and general parenting

Our whole family went through a tough time, even our baby, but we got help and pulled through together.

Rodney