

Is Being a Parent More Difficult Than You Expected?

Adjusting to the birth of a baby can be challenging. Getting by on less sleep, having less time for yourself, helping siblings get used to a new baby — these are all hurdles that many new parents face. But for some parents, having a newborn can bring emotional and psychological changes that are so overwhelming, they just don't feel like themselves.

Baby Blues and Perinatal Mood Disorders

While most women experience some mild mood changes in pregnancy or the first couple weeks after birth (known as "baby blues"), one in five women and one in 10 dads will struggle with a perinatal mood disorder, such as depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or bipolar disorder. One in 1000 will suffer from postpartum psychosis, an extremely rare but serious condition that requires immediate medical treatment.

What are the symptoms?

While baby blues generally go away after the first couple of weeks, perinatal mood disorders can occur any time during pregnancy or within the first year or two after the baby is born. Symptoms of perinatal mood disorders are more intense, and may include *some* (but not necessarily all) of the symptoms below:

| Postpartum Depression Symptoms | Postpartum Anxiety & OCD Symptoms |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You feel overwhelmed. You feel like you can't handle being a mother, and you may be wondering whether you should have become a mother in the first place.• You feel guilty because you believe you should be handling new motherhood better than this. You may wonder whether your baby would be better off without you.• You don't feel bonded to your baby.• You feel irritated or angry. You have no patience. You feel resentment toward your baby or your partner.• You feel nothing. Emptiness and numbness.• You feel sadness to the depths of your soul.• You feel hopeless, like this situation will never get better. You feel like a failure.• You can't bring yourself to eat, or perhaps the only thing that makes you feel better is eating.• You have insomnia or you can't seem to stay awake to get the most basic things done.• You can't concentrate. You can't make a decision. You feel like you're in a fog.• You feel disconnected.• You might be having thoughts of running away and leaving your family behind.• You are afraid that this is your new reality and that you've lost the "old you" forever. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your thoughts are racing. You can't quiet your mind. You can't settle down. You can't relax.• You feel like you have to be doing something at all times -- cleaning bottles, doing work.• You are worried and no matter what anyone says to reassure you, it doesn't help.• You may be having disturbing thoughts that start with the words "What if ..."• You are afraid to be alone with your baby because of scary thoughts. You may feel the need to check things constantly.• You may be having physical symptoms like stomach cramps or headaches, shakiness or nausea. You might even have panic attacks.• You feel restless and on edge.• You can't eat. You have no appetite.• You're having trouble sleeping. You are exhausted, but you can't sleep.• You feel a sense of dread, like something terrible is going to happen.• You know the way you are feeling is NOT right. You think you've "gone crazy."• You are afraid that this is your new reality and that you've lost the "old you" forever.• You are afraid that if you reach out for help people will judge you. Or that your baby will be taken away. |

When will I feel better?

If you are experiencing these symptoms, **you are not alone and it is not your fault**. Perinatal mood disorders are temporary and they are **completely treatable** with help. The resources on the next page will help you.

Maternal Wellness Resources

Getting Help

Being a good parent includes taking care of yourself. If you take care of yourself, you will be able to take better care of your baby and your family. Any parent can suffer from pregnancy or postpartum mood or anxiety disorders. It is essential to recognize symptoms and reach out for help as soon as possible so that you can prevent a worsening of symptoms and begin your recovery.

Steps to Wellness

- **Support** (emotional & practical) -- talk to a counselor or healthcare provider who has training in Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders; get support from family and friends; join a local/online support group
- **Education** -- learn as much as you can about pregnancy and postpartum depression and anxiety
- **Sleep** -- get enough rest and time for yourself
- **Nutrition** -- eat a healthy diet
- **Exercise** -- keep active by walking, stretching or whatever form of exercise helps you feel better

Get Help in an Emergency

- **Call 911** and request a CIT officer, or go to your nearest emergency room
- **Santa Clara County Crisis Hotline** -- call 1-855-278-4204 for free 24/7 confidential support
- **Crisis Text Line** -- text HOME to 741741 for free 24/7 confidential support

Telephone, Text & Online Support

- **Postpartum Support International** -- phone & online support -- 1-800-944-4773 | www.postpartum.net
- **Supporting Mamas** -- confidential text/phone line -- text or call 408-475-4408 for volunteer support

Support Groups

- **Blossom Birth** (Palo Alto) -- Pregnancy and Postpartum Moods and Challenges group -- 650-321-2326
- **Family Tree Wellness** (Los Gatos) -- Adjusting to Motherhood drop in support group -- 408-475-4408
- **El Camino Hospital** (Los Gatos) -- Pregnancy & Postpartum Resiliency Circle -- 650-962-5745
- **Good Samaritan Hospital** (San Jose) -- Perinatal Mood Drop In Support Group -- 408-559-2000

Individual Counseling / Therapy

- Call Postpartum Support International 1-800-944-4773 and ask to be connected with a California/Bay Area State Coordinator who can provide a list of local therapists that specialize in Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders

Treatment / Intensive Outpatient Programs

- **El Camino Hospital** (Mountain View) -- Maternal Outreach Mood Services (MOMS) program
Call 866-789-6089 to schedule a free, confidential assessment. Most insurance accepted.
- **Good Samaritan Hospital** (San Jose) -- Perinatal Mood Intensive Outpatient Program
Call 408-559-2000 to schedule a free, confidential assessment. Most insurance accepted.

Recommended Books and Other Resources

- **Beyond the Blues, Understanding and Treating Prenatal and Postpartum Depression & Anxiety**, Shoshana Bennett and Pec Indman, 2015 | www.beyondtheblues.com
- **Postpartum Support International** - information and resources | www.postpartum.net
- **Supporting Mamas** - information, support groups and resources | supportingmamas.org
- **Postpartum Progress** - support blog on maternal mental illness | www.postpartumprogress.com

Vitamin D and Your Infant

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that all babies receive at least 400 IU of vitamin D per day. Vitamin D is important for your baby's bone health and to prevent a disease of the bones called Rickets. Babies who drink more than 27-32 ounces of formula get their Vitamin D in the formula. However, breastfed babies and those babies drinking less than 27-32 ounces of formula per day should be supplemented with vitamin drops. In order to provide vitamin D for your baby, you can purchase drops which are available in different formulations:



1. **Poly-Vi-Sol**- Contains multiple vitamins. The dose is 1 mL daily.
2. **Tri-Vi-Sol**- Contains vitamin A, C and D. The dose is 1 mL daily.
3. **D-Vi-Sol**- Contains vitamin D only. The dose is 1 mL daily.
4. **Baby D**- Contains vitamin D only. The dose is ONE DROP (can be placed on the breast when breastfeeding or on a pacifier) once daily.
5. **Just D**- Contains vitamin D only. The dose is 1 mL daily. Some babies and parents prefer Just D because it is odorless and tasteless. Available on-line at www.sunlightvitamins.com.

You may give the vitamin drops directly into the baby's mouth and follow with a feeding, or mix it into a bottle of expressed breastmilk or formula. It is OK to give Pol-Vi-Sol or Tri-Vi-Sol *with Iron* but it is not necessary as there is enough iron in breastmilk. Poly-Vi-Sol or Tri-Vi-Sol are available at most drug or grocery stores. D-Vi-Sol is available at some drugstores. Baby D drops are available at the following local retailers as well as most Whole Foods stores. Please call before going to ensure that they are in stock:



Here are some commonly asked questions and answers on the recommendations in the AAP Clinical report, "Prevention of Rickets and Vitamin D Deficiency in Infants, Children and Adolescents."

Why do babies and old children need vitamin D?

Vitamin D is needed to help your body develop strong bones.

Why is it necessary to give vitamin D supplements to my breastfeeding baby? Doesn't human milk have all the essential nutrients for babies?

The AAP recommends breastfeeding of infants for at least 12 months and for as long thereafter as the mother and infant desire. However, human milk does not contain enough vitamin D to prevent rickets. Sunlight is the usual source of vitamin D production in the skin.

If my baby goes out in the sunlight every day or every other day for an hour or so, isn't that enough?

It may be enough sunlight exposure in some parts of the country throughout the year, but sunlight exposure is difficult to measure. Factors such as the amount of pigment in your baby's skin and skin exposure affect how much vitamin D is produced by your body from sunlight. In the more northern parts of the country during the winter, the amount of sunlight is not enough for any baby. Exposing infants and children's skin to sunlight has been shown to increase the risk for skin cancer later in life. We now recommend that infants and young children not be in direct sunlight when they are outside, particularly infants younger than 6 months of age. Sunscreens should be used on all children when in sunlight but it prevents vitamin D formation in the skin.