ESTABLISHING CLARITY
BUILDS STRENGTH

POSTNATAL DEPRESSION AND HORMONES

This type of depression occurs after the birth of a baby and can vary from the 'baby blues' which may arrive in the first seven to ten days after giving birth, to a full-blown psychotic disorder, with total rejection of the baby. The 'blues' are very common and pass almost as quickly as they arrived. Severe post-natal depression requires immediate attention.

The most common 'baby blues' symptoms are:

- Depressed mood
- Crying
- Insomnia
- Irritability

Postnatal depression affects about 10% of women and it has been noted that there is often a previous history of depression in this group of sufferers.

Symptoms are:

- Mood changes that vary from depression to elation
- Lack of interest in the baby
- Withdrawn and tearful
- Irritability
- Extreme fatigue
- Insomnia
- Anxiety
- Suicidal thoughts
- Thoughts of harming the baby

FACTS THAT CAN AFFECT MOODS AFTER A BIRTH

When a mother is expecting, the foetus takes the nutrients first and then the mother takes hers. When she nurses the baby, the nutrients again go to the baby first.

Repeated pregnancies, especially close to one another, together with nursing phases, especially lengthy ones, can result in nutrient depletion that not only affects the mother's wellbeing, but also the health and wellbeing of future babies, if left uncorrected.

A woman who is already deficient in nutrients is more likely to experience PMS and/or postnatal depression. PLEASE READ THE PMS LETTER FOR GENERAL INFORMATION AND DETAILS OF PMS SYMPTOMS.

Of course, both pregnancy and nursing are blessings, however one needs to take action to avoid PMS or postnatal issues from occurring, as well as protect the health of future pregnancies. Being forewarned about this is very valuable, in case you suddenly experience debilitating mental, emotional or physical symptoms after a baby. There are plenty of steps you can take to replenish reserves and to heal.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU SENSE THAT YOU MAY HAVE POSTNATAL DEPRESSION?

Correcting your nutrient intake with good healthy food and nutritional supplements together with receiving help in sorting environmental stresses, take priority.

Here are first line suggestions – however if symptoms persist you may need to be prescribed anti-depressants, and in a minority of cases where the depression is extreme, a psychiatrist and hospital treatment may be necessary. There is no need to feel any shame about this – it is not anyone's fault. Do not delay getting the help that is necessary.

Communicate – Never be ashamed of your low feelings after a baby and do share how you feel. It is important to share this information with your husband as well. Get help to sort the immediate stress/trauma you are facing and have the opportunity to speak to supportive loving people – good company is important.

Offload as many responsibilities as you can – Break from routine is necessary.

Counselling – Arrange this, in order to talk through your emotions and feel supported. This can also take place with a wise comforting friend or family member.

Blood tests – Check thyroid function including a check for thyroid antibodies. Clinical trials have highlighted that some women are low in iron, B6, calcium and magnesium. During pregnancy and nursing, the demands for calcium, B vitamins and magnesium are very high and loss of these can cause changes in mood. It often is that simple.

Supplements – Take a strong multivitamin and multi mineral supplement. Sometimes supplements conflict with certain medications – please bear this in mind beforehand.

Eat well – Nutrition is very important in depression. Some nutrients are specifically necessary and important for healthy mental-functioning. The first effects of nutritional deficiencies are often mental symptoms. Good food, providing both adequate calories and protein, nourishes both the body and the brain.

Limit alcohol consumption – Alcohol substantially decreases the ability of the body to extract nutrients from the food we eat – maximum of 2 units per day.

Get out – Try to go for walks pushing your pram; fresh air and sunlight is uplifting

Time for yourself – Let others care for the baby, to enable some time to nurture yourself or go for enjoyable treatments. Also, try to spend time in a stress-free environment with a companion who is willing to listen to you.

Regular exercise – Six weeks after the birth, begin with gentle exercises and stretches, and over time increase this to a point of breathlessness. Exercise will induce a hormone release which helps to lift you out of depression

Try to socialise

The influential Maryon Stewart, has, over many decades, helped hundreds of thousands of women all over the world, with various health and hormonal matters. She advises that the minimum requirement is to take a multivitamin and mineral supplement.

During pregnancy, she advises to check with your doctor if you need to include 400mcg folate. This, together with fish oil – rich in essential fatty acids – is necessary for the growth and formation of the brain and nervous system of the baby.

Contact Maryon Stewart
or Sara Devora Chrysler at sdc@noamziv.org or 0044 161 798 9415.

We hope that this has been very helpful to you. We welcome your feedback!

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