

## Suggested Readings Available in the Community

*I Wish Someone Had Told Me* by Nina Barrett (2004), Academy Chicago Publishers

*The New Mother Syndrome, Coping with Postpartum Stress and Depression* by Carol Dix (1985), Doubleday and Co.

*Postpartum Survival Guide - It Wasn't Supposed To Be Like This...* by Ann Dunnewold & Diane Sanford (1994), New Harbinger Publications

*This Wasn't What I Had Expected* by Karen Kleiman & Valerie Raskin (1994), Bantam Books\*

*Postpartum Depression and Anxiety: A Self-help Guide For Mothers* by Pacific Postpartum Support Society, Vancouver, BC

*Shouldn't I Be Happy: Emotional Problems of Pregnant and Postpartum Women* by Shaila Misri (1995), Free Press\*

*Mothering The New Mother, Your Postpartum Resource Companion* by Sally Placksin (1994), Key Porter Books

*The Postpartum Husband; Practical Solutions for Living with Postpartum Depression* by Karen Kleiman (2000), Xlibris Corporation.\*

*Down Came the Rain: My Journey Through Postpartum Depression* by Brooke Shields (2005), Hyperion.\*

\* available for loan at the IWK Family Resource Library

## Internet Sources

Canadian Health Network - [www.canadian-health-network.ca](http://www.canadian-health-network.ca) (Search their A-Z index for using the term "Postpartum depression".)

Canadian Mental Health Association - [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca) (Under the "understanding mental illness" tab go to mood disorders and click on depression.)

Canadian Paediatric Society - [www.caringforkids.cps.ca/babies/Depression.htm](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/babies/Depression.htm)

Depression After Delivery - [www.depressionafterdelivery.com](http://www.depressionafterdelivery.com)

Mood Disorders Society of Canada - [www.mooddisorderscanada.ca/depression/ppd](http://www.mooddisorderscanada.ca/depression/ppd)

The Postpartum Stress Centre - [www.postpartumstress.com](http://www.postpartumstress.com)

Postpartum Support International - [www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)

Pacific Post Partum Support Society - [www.postpartum.org](http://www.postpartum.org)

Wellmother - [www.wellmother.com](http://www.wellmother.com)

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## Public Health Services

If you have any question about postnatal health call the Public Health office nearest you. Check in your telephone directory, or visit our website at [www.gov.ns.ca/health/PublicHealth](http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/PublicHealth) or call one of the following Public Health Services offices:

Amherst	667-3319 or 1-800-767-3319
Antigonish	863-2743
Bridgewater	543-0850
Dartmouth	481-5800
New Glasgow	752-5151
Sydney	563-2400
Truro	893-5820
Wolfville	542-6310
Yarmouth	742-7141

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[www.gov.ns.ca/health/PublicHealth](http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/PublicHealth)

# Feelings...



## Now that your baby is born

## Expectations After Childbirth

Usually the arrival of a new baby is a happy time. However, this may not be true. New mothers may feel a range of different emotions from happiness to sadness.

## Postpartum Blues

After giving birth women go through many physical and emotional changes. About 80% of all women at the 2 to 3 days postpartum begin to feel:

- let down or disappointed
- sadness, teary
- mood swings
- irritable
- overwhelmed, anxious
- poor concentration
- fatigue, not sleeping well

These feelings usually go away within 1 to 2 weeks. However, about 10% of women go on to have postpartum depression.

## Postpartum Depression

Depression may begin within a few weeks after birth and sometimes lasts for months. Feelings of sadness and anxiety are more intense and affect how a mother cares for her baby and herself. Women who have postpartum depression may feel the following with greater intensity:

- sad
- weeping or crying a lot
- guilty
- angry
- drained and exhausted
- anxious
- tense
- irritable
- “not yourself”
- overwhelmed
- lonely and helpless
- full of doubts
- worthless
- have increase or decrease in appetite
- have low self esteem
- oversensitive
- easily distracted
- confused
- panic attacks
- loss of interest in things that used to bring pleasure
- loss of confidence
- scary fantasies
- thoughts of hurting your baby or yourself

If you have any or many of these symptoms remember you are not alone, and this is a very treatable illness.

- know that your feelings may have many emotional or physical causes.
- you may need professional help.
- talk with someone who will listen.
- accept help from others and don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.
- try to find some time for yourself.
- have realistic expectations of being the perfect mother and having the perfect baby.

## When To Go For Help

If you have

- scary fantasies or
- thoughts of hurting your baby or yourself

see your doctor **immediately** or go to the local hospital emergency centre.

## Where To Go For Help

If other feelings of depression persist longer than 2 to 3 weeks contact:

- your local family doctor/obstetrician
- local emergency room
- Public Health Services
- Halifax Help Line 421-1188
- Local Mental Health clinic, private counselor, psychologist or psychiatrist
- Reproductive Mental Health Service, IWK Health Centre, 470-8098.

For quick tips to postnatal health detach the next panel and put it on your refrigerator.

## Tips to good postnatal health

After the birth of your baby, here are some ways you can try to help yourself:

- Get as much sleep as you can.
- Accept you need help: turn to friends, neighbours, family.
- Do not let motherhood take over your entire life. A little selfishness can be a good thing.
- Find time for yourself without guilt and learn to relax into motherhood. For example, take a nice long bath.
- Read all you can on the subject.
- Express your feelings. Write them down. Get them out.
- Find a sympathetic listener, especially someone in the same situation. Sometimes just talking about it helps.
- Join a group of new parents in your community. Share your difficulties with someone who will not judge you.
- Avoid isolation.
- Eat small, frequent meals.
- Make a real effort to communicate with your partner. Hold on to the affection and companionship you've shared.
- Solve the problems you can and accept the rest.

