



Post-Partum Depression (Post-natal depression)

Most women who give birth experience what are known as the 'baby blues' which is a mild depression caused by both hormonal changes and adapting to a new situation. Mothers often experience anxiety, sadness, tearfulness, mood swings and problems in appetite and sleeping habits. These feelings normally fade away after 24 to 72 hours. If these feelings do not disappear after 2 to 3 weeks professional help should be sought as the mother may be suffering from post-natal depression.

Symptoms of Post-partum depression include the following:

- feelings of sadness and crying for no apparent reason;
- increased irritability;
- decreased sexual desire;
- difficulty in sleeping;
- loss of interest and pleasure in things that previously were enjoyable;
- ambivalent feelings towards the baby, lack of energy results in difficulty in meeting baby's needs;
- difficulty in concentrating;
- social withdrawal;
- anxiety usually focussed on the baby;
- loss of appetite;
- feelings of guilt at not being a good mother;
- thoughts of self-harm due to feelings of failure.

One in ten new mothers suffers from post-partum depression.

Famous people with post-partum depression:

- Brooke Shields (actress)
- Elle Macpherson (model)

Treatment: A combination of psychosocial interventions and medication are used to help individuals become in control of their conditions.

Medication: It includes antidepressants to treat severe and chronic symptoms with consideration given to mothers who are breastfeeding.

Psychotherapy: It is given by a qualified psychotherapist and usually used in conjunction with medication.