

Do you feel ...

- ✦ Sad
- ✦ Anxious
- ✦ Guilty
- ✦ Worried
- ✦ Alone
- ✦ Inadequate
- ✦ Very tired
- ✦ Panicky
- ✦ Frustrated
- ✦ Angry
- ✦ Afraid of hurting yourself or your baby

Do any of these sound familiar ...

“I feel like running away.”

“I feel like everything is crowding in on me.”

“I shouldn’t feel this way.”

“I feel like I’m going crazy.”

“I don’t feel like myself anymore.”

“I expected things to be different.”

You may be experiencing a Perinatal Mood or Anxiety Disorder ...

Baby Blues - About 80% of new mothers get the blues. Women may feel sad, overwhelmed and tired for a couple of weeks after giving birth. The blues don’t last very long and usually go away on their own.

Postpartum Depression - Women may experience a depression that does not go away after a short time. It can occur any time in the first year after giving birth to, or adopting a baby.

Postpartum Anxiety - Women may have frequent worries about many things and may experience difficulty sleeping, muscle tension, and fatigue. Women may also experience panic, obsessions, or compulsions.

Bipolar Disorder - Women experience mood swings, between highs and lows. Unlike depression symptoms, “mania” would be described as high energy, a need for less sleep, racing thoughts, and inappropriate or agitated behaviour.

Postpartum Psychosis - This is a rare illness that affects 1–2 in 1000 women, and is an emergency situation. Women with psychosis lose touch with reality. Their mood often changes quickly between very high and very low.

You are not alone.

It can happen to anyone. Up to 20% of women experience a mood or anxiety disorder after having a baby.

You won’t always feel this way.

Feelings of shame, guilt, and fear of being labeled mentally ill prevent many women from talking to their family or health care professional.

Lack of awareness or knowledge about perinatal mood and anxiety disorders cause many people to deny the seriousness of what they are experiencing.

The causes are not fully known.

Hormonal, biochemical, and psychological changes can affect a postpartum woman’s mood.

Personal or family history of depression or mental illness increases the risk of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders.

Isolation, lack of support, and stress can affect a postpartum woman’s mental health.

Previous experiences of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse may be a factor.

What you can try ...

- Rest during the day when baby sleeps
- Try to eat nourishing food
- Try to exercise or go for a walk
- Learn about perinatal mood and anxiety disorders
- Limit the time you spend with people who make you anxious
- Ignore such comments as “snap out of it” or “you should be happy to have this baby”
- Let someone you trust take care of the baby once in a while. It is okay to take time for yourself
- Reach out to your health care professional about recovery options that are available

You are not alone.
You won't always
feel this way.
There is help.

There is help.

Mother Reach

519-672-HOPE (4673)

Health Care Professional

(family doctor, midwife, nurse practitioner,
public health nurse)

London Mental Health Crisis Service

519-433-2023

Local Hospital Emergency Department

www.helpformom.ca

www.motherisk.org

www.postpartum.net

www.womensmentalhealth.org

www.postpartum.org

Adapted from:
St. Joseph's Women's Health Centre, Toronto.

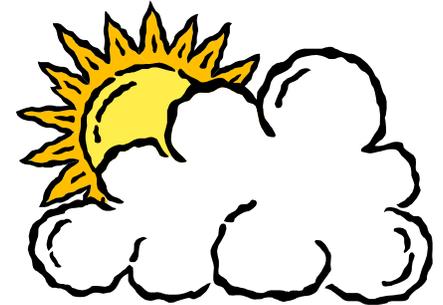
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The Baby Blues

When they won't go away



**Perinatal Mood & Anxiety
Disorders**