



BEATING THE AFTER-BABY BLUES

Baby blues occur in 50 to 80 percent of new mothers. They usually start on the second or third day after the birth and can last for some time. Symptoms include:

- ❖ **Crying Spells**
- ❖ **Mood Swings**
- ❖ **Anxiety**
- ❖ **Loneliness**
- ❖ **Decreased Sex Drive**
- ❖ **Worry About Baby**
- ❖ **Lack of confidence in mothering ability**

WHAT TO DO

While waiting for the blues to pass, you'll feel better if you take the following steps:

- ❖ **REST** – Get help with the chores, or let them go for now. Lie down and rest or sleep when the baby sleeps.
- ❖ **PLAY** – Plan frequent outings with the baby, or ask someone to babysit while you go shopping, take a walk, attend exercise classes or dine out with your partner.
- ❖ **EAT WELL** – Include plenty of whole grains, milk products, fresh fruits and vegetables, and protein-rich foods, such as fish, chicken, beef, cheese and beans.
- ❖ **SEEK SUPPORT** – Tell your partner how you feel, and ask for his help and support. Join a new mother's group, or get to know other new mothers at your church or workplace. Tell your care provider what you're experiencing.
- ❖ **TRUST YOURSELF** – Remember, even without experience, most parents do what's right for their baby.

POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

Postpartum depression (**PPD**) occurs in about ten percent of new mothers. It may start as early as the second or third postpartum day or take several weeks to develop. Many of the symptoms of baby blues are present, but they are more intense. Other symptoms include:

- ❖ **Loss of Appetite**
- ❖ **Feelings of helplessness or loss of control**
- ❖ **Overconcern or no concern at all about baby**
- ❖ **Dislike or fear of touching baby**
- ❖ **Frightening thoughts about baby**
- ❖ **Little or no concern about own appearance**
- ❖ **Inability to sleep even when baby sleeps; extreme fatigue**
- ❖ **Little regard for own safety**

WHAT TO DO

Your family and support people, as well as yourself, should watch for signs of PPD. Tell your physician, doula, or midwife how you feel and discuss being assessed for PPD. PPD can be treated with medication and counseling. The Postpartum Support International of Washington crisis line, 1-888-404-PPMD, is available 24 hours a day. Their Web site can also be accessed at www.ppmdsupport.com.