

# The Baby Blues.

Congratulations, your baby is here! The transition from pregnancy to parenthood is a major life adjustment — both physically and emotionally. The only problem is you're crying over nothing in particular, snapping at your partner, and wishing you could just jump into your car and drive somewhere — anywhere but here!

During your baby's first few days of life, it's normal to feel emotional highs and lows, something commonly referred to as the baby blues or the third-day blues - you may feel happy one minute and tearful or overwhelmed the next. For many, bringing home a new baby means stress, exhaustion, and pain, as well as coping with a serious set of raging postpartum hormones throwing all of your emotions into hyperdrive.

**These mood swings are believed to be caused by hormone changes that happen in your body after you give birth. Levels of estrogen and progesterone needed during pregnancy suddenly drop, causing shifts in mood. Other things — like being tired and not getting enough sleep, for example — also can add to these feelings.**

Here's what you need to know about the baby blues, from how they feel to how long they last.

## What are the baby blues?

Around 80 percent of people will experience the baby blues. That means 4 out of 5 new mummies experiencing it. The baby blues typically strike within a few days of giving birth, but if you had an especially tough or traumatic delivery, you may notice them even sooner.

Though research can't pinpoint exactly what causes them, their timing tells us a lot. After birth, your body goes through extreme hormonal fluctuations to help you recover and care for your baby, shrinking your uterus back to its normal size and promoting lactation, among other things. Those hormonal changes can also affect your postpartum state of mind.

The other probable cause? The postpartum period is one during which parents are not sleeping regularly (or much at all, honestly) and coping with all the major changes in routine, not eating well and lifestyle changes that come with a new baby.

You may be more at risk for feeling sad after having your baby if you had depression during a different pregnancy or at other times in your life.

## What do the baby blues feel like?

If you have the baby blues, you may:

- Feel angry, sad and cry a lot
- Tearful for no apparent reason
- Feel moody, cranky or anxious
- Have trouble sleeping, eating or making decisions
- Feel overwhelmed and that you can't do a good job of taking care of your baby
- Feel lonely or cut off from friends and family
- Have trouble concentrating
- Not feel like eating



## What can you do about the baby blues?

The baby blues usually go away on their own without treatment, there are a lot of things that may help you cope.

- Get as much sleep as you can (harder said than done with a newborn)
- Ask for help from your partner, family and friends. Tell them exactly what they can do for you, such as going food shopping or helping with your baby while you shower or sleep
- Take time for yourself, it doesn't need to be long, even 10 minutes will help. Getting some sunshine can help, too
- Try to connect with other new parents. A support group (coffee group) others who can help you feel supported and remind you that you're not alone.
- Don't drink alcohol, use street drugs, or abuse prescription drugs. All of these can affect your mood and make you feel worse.
- Eat healthy foods and
- Get some exercise if you can. Exercise can help reduce stress - and boost endorphins
- Accept help, especially in the first days and weeks after birth

## When should you call your health care provider?

Call your provider if you have any of the symptoms of baby blues or postpartum depression, especially if your symptoms:

- Include thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
- Don't get better after two weeks
- Get worse
- Make it hard for you to take care of your baby

**Fortunately, the baby blues usually only last for a few days or weeks, and usually stop on their own without medical treatment. Don't beat yourself up if you can't get it 'right' straight away, give yourself time to learn about this new little person in your life. Be present and enjoy this time knowing that it's a short period. Enjoy the snuggles, that delicious baby smell and don't do everything.**

