

## ***The health nurse can help you.***

The health nurse has experience in helping parents with symptoms of a postnatal depression.

About 2 months after having had your baby the health nurse will call on you. She will bring two questionnaires for the parents to fill out during the visit.

On the basis of your answers the health nurse will evaluate together with you if you need help and support or if there might be symptoms of a postnatal depression.

## **Worth knowing about postnatal depression**



## **A pamphlet for new parents**

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## ***What is a postnatal depression?***

It is normal within the first days after the birth to have a psychological reaction to being a new parent. The reaction may last from a few hours to several days.

Studies show that 11% of all mothers and 8-10% of all fathers develop a postnatal depression.

A postnatal depression shows itself in many different ways:

You can:

- feel sad, miserable or be crying apparently for no reason
- be lacking in self-confidence and be extra sensitive
- have no interest in your surroundings
- be restless and have difficulties sleeping
- lose your appetite or have more appetite.
- feel closed in
- have difficulties concentrating and remember badly
- blame yourself for not being good enough as a mother
- feel that things have been getting on top of you
- have difficulties being alone with your child
- be afraid of harming your child
- have thoughts of harming yourself

## ***When does a postnatal depression start?***

The symptoms may start during the pregnancy and long after having had the baby. Some of the symptoms may start within the first few days after the birth.

## ***Why are some affected by a postnatal depression?***

There is never just one specific cause to get a postnatal depression. It is caused by psychological, biological and social reasons.

The following can account for it :

- hereditary conditions
- hormonal factors
- tendency to depression or former postnatal depression
- lack of sleep
- tendency to set high standards for oneself
- difficulties in the relationship to your spouse/partner
- difficulties in the relationship to your own parents
- separation from your baby—fx. if the baby is hospitalized
- bad experience in connection with your pregnancy or birth
- many strains at the same time

## ***What can you do yourself?***

To feel unhappy in an otherwise happy situation might be shameful.

But it is important to tell how you are feeling—and ask for help.

Talk to your health nurse or doctor. They can support and guide you and clarify the help you need.

Talk to your family and friends, who you trust.

Accept all the practical help you can get:

- let the other parent take care of the baby as much as possible
- let someone help you with the housework
- get some fresh air daily and meet other people
- participate in your mother's group

## ***How long does a postnatal depression last?***

A postnatal depression passes. It differs how long it lasts depending on how severe it is and what kind of help you get.

But the most important thing is that you get help.