
POST-NATAL DEPRESSION

There has been some discussion in the media about post-natal depression - and it's good for sufferers that this subject is being openly discussed.

Symptoms can include being very weepy or seeming detached - as well as showing a loss of concentration.

One can only imagine how upsetting it must be when other people are talking with so much affection about their lovely babies. The mother with post-natal depression feels completely under par and not at all like her usual self.

But post-natal depression is very treatable and the main thing is to seek help as early as possible.

If that seems daunting on your own, start by confiding in those close to you – those who will fully accept what you're saying.

A simple 'pull yourself together' message will not work. Post-natal depression needs the care and attention of a professional, so speak to your GP or health visitor who will be able to give you that all-important support and provide the appropriate medication.

If left untreated, post-natal depression can last for many months – so if you're still feeling down and depressed months or even years after the birth – get it checked out.

You and your baby need and deserve to enjoy each other and not have depression coming between you.

Q. I am pregnant for the third time and I had post-natal depression after having my first two children. Because of my history, I am getting a lot of support – but I am still very anxious that I'll have to go through it all again.

A. It's little wonder that you are thinking about this as the birth date approaches. Try to take some reassurance from the fact that much more help, advice and understanding about post-natal depression are available than in the past.

I'm sure that following the birth of your baby, you will have thought about who will give you that very personal support – whether your partner, close family or friends.

Probably the most important thing for you is to be honest with yourself about your feelings and sufficiently confident with the professionals who are helping you – midwives, health visitors and your GP.

Don't disguise how you are feeling. The more open and frank you are, the better able professionals will be to tailor their help to your needs.

