

Pregnancy and motherhood can be tougher than expected. However there is help at hand and ways to combat or ease the symptoms of post-natal depression.

top 10 ways
of beating the baby blues

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Post-natal depression has unfortunately become a very common phenomena of modern society. The traditional social support surrounding a new family has often been replaced by individualistic and career focused societies

which give little value to family life. In India, a newborn's mother is completely pampered for forty days after birth, creating a welcoming debut into parenthood. In the West, new mothers can feel lonely, unsupported and utterly overwhelmed in the midst of the hormonal decoction of a body adjusting to breastfeeding and parenthood. The good news is that there are plenty of things which can help prevent and mitigate this physical, psychological and social phenomena not to be confused with the third day blues.

Healthy pregnancy

Pregnancy is not an excuse to all of a sudden become your local junk-food's best customer. On the contrary. The more you look after yourself, the healthier the baby and the higher the chances of a quick recovery after birth. This includes healthy nutrition, adequate exercise, life-affirming surroundings and plenty of rest. In that way your body is best equipped to deal with the marathon of birth and the challenges of a new baby.

Surrender to chaos

If you like lists and ticking them off at the end of a fruitful day in a recently cleaned house, with washed linen neatly arranged and the dinner in the oven before daddy comes home, start detaching yourself from these outcomes. In pregnancy there will be days when you feel too tired to even put your tea cup in the sink, let alone wash the dishes. These are the perfect opportunity to practice being ok with chaos whilst staying calm and centred inside – regardless of the state of your living-room. Reconnect with the divine aspects of pregnancy, birth and parenthood and nourish your body's needs first. The rest can wait until your energy comes back. Meditation and breath awareness can help tremendously in letting go of unrealistic schedules and ideals.

Manage expectations

Since the 1970s, women not only are expected to be great mums, cook delicious meals and run a comforting household, but also have a successful career, attend fitness and yoga classes, have a sparkling social network and ideally be involved in some kind of charity. With the first child, completely unrealistic ideas of motherhood are sometimes added.

Whilst many women miraculously juggle all these demanding roles, the arrival of a new baby can trickle a melt-down as hormonal changes decrease endurance levels and sleep deprivation depletes energy reserves. Dealing with your expectations beforehand and including your partner in this conversation can make a huge difference.

Reduce other stresses

Pregnancy and birth can be a very creative time in people's lives. It is not unheard of that during this time boundless possibilities start opening up, such as new business ideas, moving house or even country. If dealing with change is not one of your strengths, avoid any additional transitions on top of a baby's arrival.

Wholesome Nutrition

Fresh and home-made food provides the body with the best base to reach its optimal state of physical, mental and emotional well-being. Preparing wholesome food before the birth and freezing it in one-meal portions can make post-natal life tremendously healthier and easier. Moreover, put your best friends on a roster and ask them to provide

you with one healthy meal a day during the first ten days after birth instead of giving you yet another baby-suit which you probably won't need. There is evidence suggesting that an increase in zinc and omega oils decreases the risk of depression. Thus up your diet in sesame products, dark green vegetables, tuna and salmon.

Exercise and fresh air

In hand with good food comes enough exercise and fresh air. Don't schedule more than one appointment, but make sure you leave the house at least once a day. A walk through the park not only helps you lose your pregnancy weight faster, but the movement and fresh-air will also help brighten up a cloudy sky. In addition, make sure to practice your pelvic floor muscles daily, starting straight after birth. Incontinence and related issues make post-natal recovery more difficult and can often be mitigated.

Sleep

Just as important as exercise is getting appropriate rest. If napping is not your thing, start practicing it during the last weeks and months of pregnancy. Otherwise the sleep deprivation associated with regular night-feeds will take the toll on your mood and everyone else around you rather sooner than later.

Connect with other mums

Frequent catch ups with other mums are one of the most helpful ways of keeping a simple sleep-deprived bad day from developing into a wider sense of hopelessness and inadequacy. Sharing what's on your mind in trust and confidence and realising that others are going through similar phases, can put issues into perspective. There is scientific proof that women gatherings increase the level of oxytocin which is the hormone that makes us fall in love, helps us birth our babies, assists with breast-feeding and bonding and generally makes us feel good.

Use your support network

If you have the luxury of family support near-by, ask them to take your baby out for a walk every now and then so you can rest. Resist doing the clean-up and dishes during this time. If your family is far away, team up with other mums in a similar position. Create support networks and babysit each other's children when one needs time off for appointments, rest or even a date night with your partner.

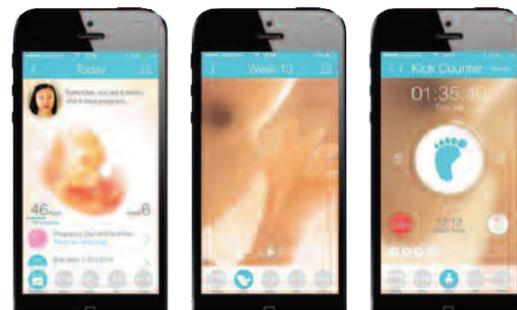
DON'T SCHEDULE MORE THAN ONE APPOINTMENT, BUT MAKE SURE YOU LEAVE THE HOUSE AT LEAST ONCE A DAY.

Seeking professional help

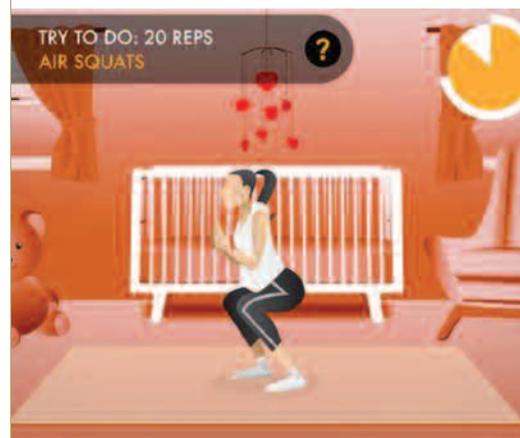
If none of the above helps and symptoms like anxiety, feeling worthless or inadequate, wanting to harm yourself or your baby, lack of interest in anything or constant feeling of sadness continue for more than a couple of weeks, seek some professional help. This can be anything from individual or couple counselling, over group support to regular visits with specially trained Chinese Medicine practitioners, chiropractors, yoga and meditation teachers and other natural health specialists.

Most women affected go on to lead happy and productive lives overcoming post-natal depression if equipped with the appropriate coping strategies. 📌

useful apps



Pregnancy is the perfect companion to read a daily blog, work out your due date, see images of how your baby is growing inside of you, input your doctor's appointments and results, think up baby names, and work out what you need to buy.



Prenatal helps you keep your body in shape in the privacy of your own home, with an option of 3 different exercise routines per trimester. Easy to use and portable, so once the morning sickness subsides there is no better time to get started.



Pampers is a reliable brand we all know and can rely on to keep our baby's bottom dry, and comfortable throughout the night.