

Self care



Easy English

Hard words



This book has some hard words.

The first time we write a hard word

- the word is in **blue**

- we write what the hard word means.

You can get help with this book



You can get someone to help you

- read this book

- know what this book is about

- find more information.



About this book



Health
and Human
Services

This book is written by the
Department of Health and Human Services.

This book is about **self care** for parents.



What is self care?

Self care means you look after yourself.

Sleep

To help you get enough sleep

- go to bed at the same time each night
- make your bedroom a place you can relax
- have naps for 20 minutes in the day when your baby is asleep.





Before bed do **not**

- exercise



- use your phone



- drink coffee

- have naps late in the day.

Exercise

Make a time for exercise once every day.



Exercise might mean

- a walk outside with the pram



- yoga.

Eat healthy food



Make sure you

- eat healthy snacks in the day



- drink water when you are thirsty

- make easy meals on busy days.

For example, eggs or a toasted sandwich.

Make friends



To help you meet new people you can

- join a new parent group or play group



- go to events in your local community



- join a group on social media.

Be nice to yourself



It is normal to feel upset or scared sometimes.



It can help to

- talk to someone you trust



- plan things you can do to feel better.

Talk to your partner

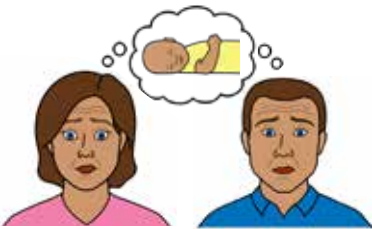


A new baby can change your relationship with your partner.

It might be hard to get along with your partner.

For example, you might

- **not** agree about how to share the jobs and house work



- worry about how to be a good parent

- have less time to do nice things together.



Talk to your partner about your problems first.



If you are still worried about your relationship you might talk to a **relationship counsellor**.

A relationship counsellor is an expert who can help you and your partner work out problems.

Why is self care important?



Self care can help you

- feel good



- be healthy



- be a good parent.

You can use self care any time.

For example



- when your baby is asleep



- when someone else looks after your baby.

Your mental health



There are many changes to your life after you have a baby.

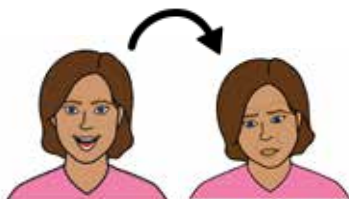


Changes to your mental health are normal.

Baby blues

Baby blues means you feel sad after your baby is born. For example

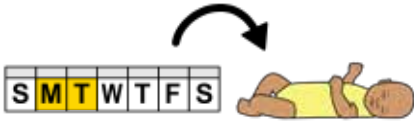
- you feel tired
- you cry a lot
- you are grumpy
- your mood changes often.





Baby blues

- are normal



- happen in the first few days after you have your baby

- go away after a few days.

Postnatal anxiety



Post natal anxiety means you

- worry about things most of the time



- worry that you might do things wrong all the time



- find it hard to sleep.

You might have **panic attacks**.

Panic attacks might mean



- you feel like things are out of control

- everything feels like it is too much



- your heart beats fast or you might find it hard to breathe.

Postnatal depression



Postnatal depression means you

- feel sad most of the time



- can **not** cope with things



- can **not** think straight.



You might find it hard to

- eat



- sleep



- focus.

Postnatal depression

- can happen in the first year after you have your baby

- can last 1 - 2 years if you do **not** get help.

Are mental health problems common?

1 in 7 mothers get postnatal depression.



1 in 10 fathers get postnatal depression.



You might be more likely to get postnatal depression if

- you have had depression or anxiety before



- someone in your family has mental health problems



- you feel tired or do **not** get enough support



- you use drugs or alcohol



- there are big changes to your life.

For example, you move house.

Help for postnatal depression



Postnatal depression happens less if you

- use self care



- think about things in a positive way

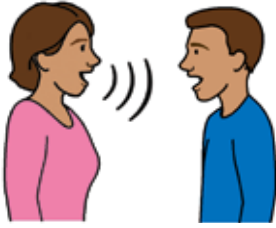


- have people around that care for you



- ask for help when you need it.

It is okay to get help



There is nothing wrong with asking for help.



You are **not** a bad person if you feel sad after you have a baby.



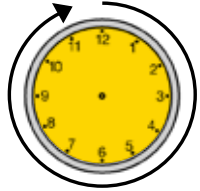
Lots of people get help for postnatal depression.

There is information about safe ways to get help at the end of this book.



Where to get help

If you are worried about mental health you can call the Maternal and Child Health Line.



The helpline is open 24 hours per day and 7 days per week.



Call 13 22 29.



You can contact your

- Maternal and Child Health Nurse

- doctor



- counsellor or psychologist.

Beyond Blue

Go to the Beyond Blue website

<https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au/pregnancy-and-new-parents>



Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia or PANDA



Call 1300 726 306



The help line is

- free



- open Monday to Friday from
9 am to 7.30 pm.



Website

www.panda.org.au

Centre of Perinatal Excellence or COPE

Website

www.cope.org.au/new-parents/postnatal-mental-health-conditions/postnatal-mental-health-factsheets-resources/



Help for dads

Relationship Australia website

supportforfathers.com.au/resources



Raising Children website

raisingchildren.net.au

COPE website

cope.org.au/readytocope

Beyond Blue website.

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/about-us/>

Clinical care



You can get special help from hospitals for serious mental health problems.



Website

www.health.vic.gov.au/

[mentalhealthservices/adult/index.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealthservices/adult/index.htm)



More information

For more information contact the Department of Health and Human Services.



Website

[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/
healthyliving/Child-health-0-6](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/Child-health-0-6)



If you need help to speak or listen

You can use the National Relay Service or NRS if you need help to make a call.



Call the NRS help desk

1800 555 660



Go to the NRS website

communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs



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