**Coping with Postpartum Depression**

Having a baby is stressful, no matter how much you’ve looked forward to it or how much you love your child. It can feel like an emotional rollercoaster. But if feelings of sadness become severe and start to interfere with your everyday life you may be experiencing postpartum depression. While the most effective way to treat postpartum depression is to see a doctor, there are also things you can do at home to cope with everyday life.

**Create a secure attachment with your baby.**  A secure attachment is formed when you as the mother respond warmly and consistently to your baby’s physical and emotional needs. Bonding with your baby releases endorphins that make you feel happier and more confident as a mom.

**Lean on others for help and support.** Research has shown that positive social contact relieves stress faster and more efficiently than any other means of stress reduction.

**Create time for yourself.** Let your partner or another trusted adult take the baby for an hour or two. Then go for a walk, take a nap, or do some yoga and meditation.

**Make time for your relationship with your partner.** Remember that you are in this together. Keep the lines of communication open and carve out couple time.

**Exercise when you can.** Studies show that exercise may be just as effective as medication when it comes to treating depression. Take a walk or do some stretching exercises.

**Schedule sleep.** This may seem impossible, especially if you are breast feeding but a lack of sleep is linked to increased depressive symptoms. It is important to sleep while the baby sleeps or consider pumping a bottle so your partner can take care of an overnight feeding or two.

**Maintain a healthy diet.** Eating nutritious foods can help you feel better and give your body the nutrients you need. It may be helpful to plan the week’s meals on the weekend or have food around that is easy to grab on the go.

**Focus on fish oils.** Now is a good time to increase your intake of omega-3 fatty acids, like DHA. Women who have low levels of DHA have higher rates of postpartum depression.

**Examine your breast-feeding.** Studies suggest that breast-feeding may reduce your risk of developing postpartum depression. That being said, there are some cases where women develop depression symptoms while breast-feeding. It is important to make decisions about breast-feeding based on your situation.

Helpguide.org. “Postpartum Depression and the Baby Blues: Signs, Symptoms, and Treatment for Depressed New Moms.” <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/postpartum-depression-and-the-baby-blues.htm>

Marcin, Ashley. “7 Ways to Cope with Postpartum Depression.” *Healthline*, 12 Oct. 2016, https://www.healthline.com/health/depression/how-to-deal-with-postpartum-depression