

Together we can

METROPOLITAN
HEALTH GROUP



QUALSA

excellence you can trust

Banishing baby blues

Recognising and dealing with postnatal depression and anxiety.

This Women's Day we salute all working moms across South Africa. Caring for a new baby is hard work. No matter how well prepared you are, balancing work and your family won't always be easy. This is normal.

You'll probably experience a wide range of feelings, from excitement and joy to frustration and anger, guilt and anxiety. Sometimes these unhappy feelings are so intense that you feel overwhelmed and out of control. If this happens, you may be suffering from postnatal depression and anxiety.

If you feel

- * Irritable and confused.
- * Out of control.
- * Like crying for no reason.



- * Exhausted all the time.
- * Helpless.
- * Not good enough.
- * Unable to cope.
- * Worried all the time.
- * Scared and panicky.
- * Ashamed and guilty.

Or if you struggle to

- * Sleep.
- * Eat normally.
- * Feel motivated.
- * Be sexually intimate with your partner.
- * Concentrate on your work.

Even if you feel like

- * You don't love your baby the way you think you should.
- * You think you might harm yourself or the baby.

DON'T WORRY

You are not alone. According to Jalize Uys, who manages Metropolitan Health Group's employee support programme, at least one in 10 new mothers in South Africa can have clinical signs of depression and anxiety during pregnancy and in the first year after the birth of a baby.

What to do when you feel depressed

- * Identify, acknowledge and express your feelings.
- * Accept that this is not your fault.
- * Ask for help – you don't have to do it all alone.

- * Eat healthy snacks and take regular vitamins.
- * Remember the person you were before your baby.
- * Invest time in yourself – rest and relaxation are the best gifts you can give yourself and your baby.
- * Don't let people who tell you to pull yourself together or that you should be grateful get to you.
- * Speak to someone – your clinic sister or doctor, or call a postnatal support telephone network.

How can postnatal depression and anxiety be treated?

- * Join a support group of other women who really understand how you feel.
- * Contact your doctor or clinic. Anti-depressant medication can help to control the symptoms.
- * Psychotherapy or counselling is helpful in addressing underlying psychological and relationship difficulties.

Tips on how to settle in at work

- * Prioritise your work and make a daily list of things to do.
- * Go for refresher courses if need be.
- * Make a roster of your week plan – work shifts, menus, baby duties, etc.
- * Always have two of everything at home to limit your after-work shopping.

For support and assistance call the Post-Natal Depression Support Association of South Africa on 082 882 0072.