



## Tips for Postpartum Dads and Partners

Pregnancy and postpartum depression and anxiety affect the whole family. Here are some tips that might help you along the way. Remember that you will get through this with help and support. There is no magic cure, and sometimes recovery seems slow, but things will keep improving if you stick to a plan of healthcare, support, and communication.

### COMMON SYMPTOMS of PERINATAL DEPRESSION & ANXIETY

- Feeling overwhelmed, exhausted and insecure
- Crying spells, sadness, hopelessness
- Anger, irritability, frustration
- Repetitive fears and worries

### TAKING CARE OF YOUR STRESS AND EMOTIONS

- Ask for help, information, and support for yourself.
- Develop a support team for your family. Ask friends and family for help. Say YES when they offer.
- Take time for yourself.
- Talk to other families who have come through this.
- Spend time with your baby to develop your own confidence.

### HOW TO HELP MOM

- Reassure her: this is not her fault; she is not alone; she will get better.
- Encourage her to talk about her feelings and listen without judgment.
- Help with housework before she asks you.
- Encourage her to take time for herself. She needs to rest - she will feel worse when she is tired.
- Don't expect her to be super-housewife just because she's home all day.
- Be realistic about what time you will be home, and come home on time.
- Help her reach out to others for support and treatment.
- Schedule some dates with her and work together to find a babysitter.
- Offer simple affection and physical comfort, but be patient if she does not yet want sex. It's normal for her to have a low sex drive with depression, and rest and recovery will help to bring it back.

### DEALING WITH HER ANGER AND IRRITABILITY

- Do what you can to make sure she eats regularly throughout the day, because low blood sugar results in a bad mood. Have healthy and easy snacks on hand.
- Try to hear what she needs when she is frustrated. Tell her you are listening.
- Keep communicating with her. It is helpful to take a break if your tempers are hot, but do get back to communicating.
- If she is expressing anger in such a way that you can't stay supportive, you might say something like, "I want to listen to you. I know this is important, but I'm having a hard time because you're so mad at me. Can we take a break and talk about it later?"
- Ask her how you can help her "right now." If she doesn't know, make some suggestions.

**REACH OUT:** Call us at 800-944-4773 or text 503-894-9453 for resources, support, and referrals.