

Baby Blues ?



You've just given birth, and you're sitting in your hospital room with your newborn baby. You're happy with the birth, and you've received friendly visits from friends and neighbors. Everything is going great. You turn on the TV, and a commercial comes on for Cocoa Cola. For reasons you don't quite understand, the commercial touches you – and you start to cry. Not just tear up, but really cry.

The baby blues, a normal but not-so-pleasant part of the postpartum stage, is a tendency to tears and sensitivity in the first days, weeks, and sometimes months after childbirth. Your rapidly changing hormones, along with the physical exhaustion, place emotions on hyper-drive. Not so terrible situations may reduce you to tears, and if you have to deal with nasty relatives or difficult situations, your perception and reactions will be even stronger. Not pleasant at all.

“I had the baby blues after my daughter was born,” explains Heather Cook, of Alberta, Canada. “It was brought about by a sudden change in our living situation about a week after she was born. We were given a rental increase that meant we were going to have to move, and it stressed me out beyond belief! I spent two days crying... I was really worried I was going to go into some sort of downward spiral and crack.”

“With my second baby,” says Amy Hood of Rhode Island, “the hardest thing was feeling inadequate. I felt – detached is the wrong word, because we co-slept, nursed, he lived in the sling – but I was so tired, and emotionally had not recovered from his birth. I would realize that I was, say, changing his diaper, and I hadn't even made eye contact with him, or talked to him. . . . So I felt guilty on top of everything else.”

There are some things you can do to help cope with the baby blues. While the sensitivity will still be there, you can do things for yourself to make life a little easier.

Eat and Drink This sounds too simple, but the fact of the matter is, between the newborn baby and all the regular stressors of life, many new moms forget or don't find time to nourish themselves. Make it a habit to bring a bottle of water with you every time you nurse or feed the baby. This way, getting hydrated will become part of the routine. You'll be more likely to remember to drink.

For food, get your husband or family member to make sure the house has plenty of healthy snacks -- fruits, pre-cut veggies, granola bars, instant oatmeal, or cereal – things that don't take much time or effort to prepare and eat. Write out your meal plan for the week, too. If you write down what you plan to eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, you'll be more likely to take the time to do it. Plan for simple meals, or, better yet, hire a postpartum doula or find a good friend who'd be willing to cook and freeze a few dinners. And don't feel guilty if you find yourself ordering out more often. You just had a baby, give yourself a break.

Take Time To Just Be After you start to physically feel better after the birth, you may find yourself running around and trying to finish things that were started before the baby was born, or you may find yourself busy entertaining friends and family who come to visit. You may get into this, “Rush, rush, there are things to do,” mind set, like the Mad Hatter in Alice in Wonderland. While being busy can have its benefits, it's also important to find time to stop and just be.

“I ended up dropping anything that wasn't important and spending the day with my daughter,” says Heather.



“I took pictures of her, just laid on the couch with her, and didn’t go anywhere near a phone, computer or any other people. They were all well meaning, but they wanted to talk about my daughter or me, or ask how I was... and I didn’t want to talk to them. Withdrawing really helped me refocus.”

Be Creative Women are creators, and giving birth may be one of the most creative ways we express this innate desire. Finding time to be creative can help you relieve stress and help you release pent up emotions.

What kinds of things can you do? The skies the limit -- paint, sew, knit, crochet, scrapbook, write in a journal, take pictures. Whatever you like, do it, and have fun.

If you have older children at home, you may enjoy sitting on the floor and coloring with them. And if you don’t already have some crayons and coloring books because you don’t have older kids, or your children have “outgrown” that stage, buy some for yourself. While you’re in the craft section of the market, why not treat yourself to some magic markers, glitter, craft scissors, and colored paper.

Let yourself be a kid again, and don’t worry so much about the end results or what you’ll do with whatever you create. Make messy art for no other reason than to enjoy the process.

Hire Outside Help If you can’t hire someone, then try to enlist a family member or good friend. If you can find someone else to take care of the laundry, dishes, and basic tidying up, you’ll feel less stressed. If this isn’t your first baby and you have older kids to care for, consider hiring a babysitter to come at night to help with nightly routines, like bathing, PJs, and story time. She can also help the kids put their toys away.

A postpartum doula is the ideal post-birth helper. She’ll not only help you with basic tidying and meals, but she’ll also listen to your concerns and help answer questions you may have. Plus, unlike a maid or babysitter, the doula is trained to understand what new moms need most, emotionally and physically. She’ll make sure you’ve had a meal, and if not, cook something up for you. She’ll also watch the baby so you can shower or rest for awhile. If you can afford her, a postpartum doula is well worth the expense and effort to find.

This information is shared with us by www.doula.com

