

# Maternal Mental Health Program

Because you matter... Because we care....

The feeling of “baby blues” is very common. Many women feel anxious, sad or down during their pregnancy or after their baby is born.

*It's OK to feel this way. It's also OK to ask for help if you need it.*

Many women feel like they “should be happy” about having a baby. They think there is something wrong if they aren't happy all the time. But feeling sad or worried is part of the changes that come with being pregnant and having a new baby. For most women these feelings last a few days or a few weeks. They usually go away on their own.

*One way to take care of yourself is to ask family and friends for help.*

Feeling sad or worried is not just due to “hormones.” Changes in your body can play a part, but changes in your sleep patterns and lifestyle may also be involved. Feeling sad is also more likely when you feel you aren't getting enough support. To cope with all the changes, it helps to get support from other people.

*Some of these things could be normal during pregnancy or after having a baby, but others might be signs of depression.*

Sometimes your feelings can seem out of control. As many as one out of every four women feels so sad after giving birth that they are considered to have depression. If you feel sad or worried more often than not, you may be depressed. You might be depressed if you feel so sad or worried that you can't function in your day-to-day life. Other signs of depression are trouble sleeping, weight loss or gain, or wanting to sleep all the time. These signs don't always mean that you are depressed. They could also just be part of being a new mother. But it is very important to get help if you do think you are depressed, if you feel guilty or worthless, or if you feel like you don't want to live any more.

*Many people are frightened by news reports about depressed women who harm their children.*

Extreme depression occurs in less than 1 out of 1,000 women. Most women who are extremely depressed do not actually hurt anyone. If you have thoughts about harming yourself, your baby, or someone else, stay calm and tell someone else how you are feeling. If you are worried that you may act on your feelings, it's important that you get help now. This can help prevent problems for you and your baby. If you are having an emergency, **call 911 right away or go directly to the nearest emergency room**. You can also get help 24 hours a day by **calling MHN at 800-977-7585 (TTY users call 711)**. MHN can help you find a doctor or a therapist to assist you. You can also talk to your doctor about depression. Your doctor can tell you about depression and what you can do to get help. He or she may also give you medicine for depression. Some drugs are safer than others for you and your baby. Be sure to ask your doctor about safety information before you take any drugs, herbs or natural medicines.

*If you have some of these feelings, take the survey in this packet.*

You don't have to take the survey, but it can help you know if you might be depressed, and help you sort out depression from normal feelings that women have while pregnant or after having a baby. To take the survey, just check your answers to each question. After finishing, **call MHN at 800-977-7585 (TTY users call 711)** to talk about your results. **When you call, be sure to tell the person who answers the phone that you are pregnant or just had a baby, and that you have taken the survey and want to talk about the results with someone.** A licensed therapist will talk with you and help you get the services that you need. Even if you don't take the survey, **call MHN at 800-977-7585 (TTY users call 711)** if you think you might be depressed. When you call, be sure to say that you are pregnant or just had a baby and are feeling depressed or upset. MHN can guide you to get help.

### *Need help?*

Call toll-free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week: **800-977-7585**

TTY users call **711**.

## *Pre/Postnatal Depression Scale*

Since you are either pregnant or just had a baby, we would like to know how you are feeling. Please check the answer that comes the closest to **how you have felt in the past 7 days**—not just how you feel today. Complete all of the 10 items below and then call MHN at 800-977-7585 (TTY users call 711) if you would like to talk about your results.

**In the past 7 days...**

**1. I have been able to laugh and see the funny side of things:**

- As much as I always could \_\_\_\_\_ (0)
- Not quite so much now \_\_\_\_\_ (1)
- Definitely not so much now \_\_\_\_\_ (2)
- Not at all \_\_\_\_\_ (3)

**2. I have looked forward with enjoyment to things:**

- As much as I ever did \_\_\_\_\_ (0)
- Rather less than I used to \_\_\_\_\_ (1)
- Definitely less than I used to \_\_\_\_\_ (2)
- Hardly at all \_\_\_\_\_ (3)

**3. I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong:**

- Yes, most of the time \_\_\_\_\_ (3)
- Yes, some of the time \_\_\_\_\_ (2)
- Not very often \_\_\_\_\_ (1)
- No, never \_\_\_\_\_ (0)

**4. I have been anxious or worried for no good reason:**

- No, not at all \_\_\_\_\_ (0)
- Hardly ever \_\_\_\_\_ (1)
- Yes, sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ (2)
- Yes, very often \_\_\_\_\_ (3)

**5. I have felt scared or panicky for no good reason:**

- Yes, quite a lot \_\_\_\_\_ (3)
- Yes, sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ (2)
- No, not much \_\_\_\_\_ (1)
- No, not at all \_\_\_\_\_ (0)

**6. Things have been getting to me:**

- Yes, most of the time I haven't been able to cope at all \_\_\_\_\_ (3)
- Yes, sometimes I haven't been coping as well as usual \_\_\_\_\_ (2)
- No, most of the time I have coped quite well \_\_\_\_\_ (1)
- No, I have been coping as well as ever \_\_\_\_\_ (0)

7. I have been so unhappy that I have had difficulty sleeping:
- Yes, most of the time \_\_\_\_\_ (3)
- Yes, sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ (2)
- No, not very often \_\_\_\_\_ (1)
- No, not at all \_\_\_\_\_ (0)
8. I have felt sad or miserable:
- Yes, most of the time \_\_\_\_\_ (3)
- Yes, quite often \_\_\_\_\_ (2)
- Not very often \_\_\_\_\_ (1)
- No, not at all \_\_\_\_\_ (0)
9. I have been so unhappy that I have been crying:
- Yes, most of the time \_\_\_\_\_ (3)
- Yes, quite often \_\_\_\_\_ (2)
- Only occasionally \_\_\_\_\_ (1)
- No, never \_\_\_\_\_ (0)
10. The thought of harming myself has occurred to me:\*
- Yes, quite often \_\_\_\_\_ (3)
- Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ (2)
- Hardly ever \_\_\_\_\_ (1)
- Never \_\_\_\_\_ (0)

Total Your Score Here ►

If your score is 10 or greater, you may have some depression. Please contact MHN at 800-977-7585 (TTY users call 711). Tell the person who answers the telephone that you are pregnant or just had a baby, you took the depression survey and would like to talk to someone about your results. A care manager will talk with you about how you are doing. We are here to help.

Here are some other resources for you if you have more questions or need additional help:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

National Alliance for Mental Illness

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) and 1-800-950-6264

National Institute of Mental Health

[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

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