

## Special Tips for Dads

**Be prepared**– take childbirth classes.

**Run interference** with well-meaning friends and family.

**Let your wife rest.** Be prepared to do some night duty to allow your wife to get rest.

Expect her to be more emotional and **offer support**, hugs and listening when needed.

**Take care of yourself.** New demands of a baby affect both of you.

**Communicate openly** about your feelings.

**Set aside time** for your own interests and for yourselves as a couple.

**Split the responsibility of caregiving** for this new member of the family. Changing diapers, feeding, and playing are great times for bonding and your wife will also appreciate your willingness to be a partner in the care of your child.

**Accept help** from friends and family when offered.

**Seek professional help** if your spouse shows signs of prolonged sadness, tearfulness, trouble concentrating, sleeping too much or too little, or is neglectful of the baby for longer than three days.

### Seek immediate help if...

- you hear expressions of hopelessness.
- your wife expresses intentions to harm herself or the baby.
- you notice hallucinations or paranoid behavior.

### Useful Websites:

<http://www.sw.org/>  
(select Health Topics A-Z)

<http://www.sw.org/sw/portal>  
(select Health Plan, Lifestyle Management Program/Tools)

<http://www.postpartum.net>

<http://pregnancy.about.com>

<http://ppdsupport.org/family.htm>

<http://my.webmd.com>

<http://www.newdads.com>

<http://depressionafterdelivery.com>

<http://www.melaniesbattle.org/story.html>

<http://www.americanbaby.com>



**SCOTT & WHITE**  
HEALTH PLAN



Facts and Tips for  
New Moms and Dads

*Postpartum*

*Depression (PPD)*

## *Postpartum Depression*

- is temporary and treatable.
- may start even before delivery.
- suspected cause is changes in hormones after childbirth.
- is depression that lasts longer than two weeks.
- affects your ability to participate in normal activities or care of your child.
- if untreated can lead to problems for the baby such as lower IQ, poor language skills and behavior problems.
- can be safely treated during and after pregnancy under a doctor's care. Treatment of PPD protects both the mother and the baby.

### **Remember you are not alone!**

- PPD is common, occurring in 10-15% of women after childbirth.
- Up to 18% of women who are pregnant suffer from depression.

## *Persons at risk are women who*

- have a prior history of depression.
- had PPD with a prior pregnancy.
- have close family members with depression.
- have little social support from husbands, family and others.
- are dealing with stressful situations before, during and after pregnancy.

## *Know the Difference*

### **Baby Blues...**

- is a temporary condition.
- occurs in 80% of women after child birth.
- has symptoms beginning 3-4 days after delivery.
- worsens by days 5-7 and tends to go away within two weeks.
- may cause mother to have mood swings, be irritable, anxious, tearful or have problems coping.

### **Postpartum Depression...**

- is a biological illness caused by changes in brain chemistry.
- is a depressed mood every day for longer than two weeks.
- requires professional help by a doctor.
- causes loss of interest in activities usually enjoyed.
- can have symptoms of paranoia, hallucinations.
- sometimes affects sleep and appetite.

### **PPD can be treated with medication and professional help.**

- Antidepressants can reduce PPD symptoms. Some are safe for mothers who breast-feed their babies.
- Be honest with your doctor about your feelings so he or she can prescribe a course of treatment to make you feel better.

## *Social Support*

Studies have shown women with good social support from husbands and other family and friends have a lower incidence of problems after childbirth.

## *Prevention Tips*

- Attend childbirth classes to learn about pregnancy and childbirth.
- Set up a social support table of friends and family and what they are willing to do to help in a "pinch".
- Rest and nap frequently.
- Size up tasks and duties and let those go that don't absolutely need doing.
- Exercise! Once over the physical effects of childbirth, it is good to find some enjoyable form of exercise and do it daily. Exercise promotes a sense of well-being and speeds recovery.
- Look for postpartum depression support groups for new moms and dads.

### **Contact your Doctor immediately if you feel:**

- you want to hurt yourself
- you want to hurt your baby or your other children.