

How to get help

Use our website: www.pni-uk.com

E-mail: help@pni-uk.com

Support group:

Birth Trauma
& PNI Services:

Baby Massage:

Relaxation classes:

Helpline service: **01335 347599**
For times of crisis and extreme need

PNI-UK would like to thank the following organisations for supporting this project.



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PeriNatal Illness -UK

Patron Ms Fern Britton

Postnatal Illness/Depression & Birth Trauma
It affects women from all walks of life.

PNI-UK
Helping women & their families through a difficult time
Established March 2003
Registered Charity 1105767

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What is Postnatal Illness/Depression?

It can take six months or more from giving birth for a mother to tell someone how she truly feels. A mother may have felt 'not right' since pregnancy, childbirth or very soon afterwards. Some women say they 'knew' deep down they had postnatal illness/depression of some kind early on.

Their 'Baby Blues' hadn't gone away.

Mild Symptoms: treated by your GP, Health Visitor & Midwife.

Not feeling like 'yourself'; feeling anxious, tearful, angry and irritable, (especially towards those you love). Wanting to run away, feeling life is 'getting on top of you'; feeling guilty for thinking like this. Scared of telling your GP; finding it difficult to concentrate.

Thinking you're 'exaggerating' the symptoms you feel; wishing you could have your old life back, feeling 'not quite right'; can't face going out; can't stay in the house; needing company.

Moderate Symptoms: treated by a Multidisciplinary Team of Community Psychiatric Nurses, Health Visitor & your GP.

Crying; anxiety about your baby's health or welfare; horrible thoughts about you and/or your baby; feeling you are a 'bad mother'; fear of being judged 'mad'. Thoughts you would be scared of sharing with anyone else; loss of appetite; lack of libido; feeling very alone; exhaustion.

Fleeting suicidal thoughts; excessive cleaning, especially at night.

Severe Symptoms: treated by a Specialist Mum & Baby Unit.

Puerperal Psychosis. Severe postnatal illness symptoms which need 'specialist approved' drug therapy and assessment. Needing the support of nursing staff to care for you and your baby in a place specially designed for that purpose.

Birth Trauma Symptoms: Playing the birth over and over in your mind.

Anxiety symptoms; anger at the delivery staff in the hospital; crying; fear of becoming pregnant again; fear of vaginal examinations/cervical smears.

Do you have Postnatal Illness/Depression or Birth

Trauma? Opposite are some questions which may help you to recognise whether you have some common symptoms. Tick off those answers which apply to your situation. If it helps, show your GP/HV/Midwife those which apply to you. Use our website www.pni-uk.com if you have any questions or concerns and can't face telling anyone just yet.

During pregnancy

- Are you **extremely** anxious about your pregnancy and really dreading giving birth, especially about having a Caesarean Section?
- Do you fear for your baby's health & life during your pregnancy or shortly after giving birth?
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- Have you suffered with depression or PNI before? Did you have symptoms of depression and/or anxiety during this pregnancy or a previous pregnancy?

Postnatally:

- Do you feel you are a 'bad' person or a 'bad' mother' rather than thinking you have some kind of postnatal illness?
- Do you have horrible and distressing thoughts about yourself and your baby? Eg visualising terrible things happening to your baby, caused by you?
- Are you worrying a lot about your baby's health and welfare?
- Do you have any fast moving thoughts which don't go away, especially when you try to sleep?
- Do you have thoughts you feel you'd never tell anyone about?
- Do you think about knives, or other dangerous objects?
- Are you **unable** to enjoy your life, have you **lost** your sense of humour since having your baby?
- Have you felt 'not right in yourself' since the birth of your baby and find you are hiding from others how you really feel?

Possible Birth Trauma:

- Did you (whilst pregnant) have severe anxiety or **extreme** fear about a possible Caesarean Section?
- Does your mind keep playing the birth over and over?
- Do you avoid talking about the birth/listening to birth stories?
- Do you feel preoccupied by how you were treated at the birth?
- When you think about or are reminded about your birth experience, does your heart race, or do you feel anxious?
- Do you feel so angry about how you were treated, that you fantasise about shouting at or hurting the staff who delivered your baby?
- Did you feel numb after having your baby - (like he/she wasn't really yours) - and has this numbness not gone away?
- Do your memories of the birth come and go in your mind quickly and repeatedly?