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# Program of Resources, Information and Support for Mothers



# Depression after the birth of your baby

Having a baby is generally a positive experience. However, feelings of sadness, exhaustion, feeling alone and overwhelmed by the situation are not uncommon. These feelings may only be short lived, but for some women, they can last for weeks, months or even longer.

Recent studies in Australia show that 1 in 6 mothers experience some form of depression following the birth of their baby.

## Why do some mothers feel depressed?

Recent research has found certain factors to be clearly linked with depression. Things like feeling alone or unsupported, ongoing physical health problems, and having a sick or difficult baby *may* contribute to depression after birth.

## What Can Help

✪ **Find someone to talk to** : it may be your partner, family member, friend or health professional. The main thing is that they are a good listener, someone who can share the burden and acknowledge your difficulties. It is not always easy to talk with someone, but most mothers who have been in this situation report that it is helpful, and often a turning point.



✪ **Join a support group** : new mums are excellent for sharing experiences and making new friends. Playgroups, craft groups, walking groups can also be helpful. Specific groups such as PaNDa ((03) 9836 7382) offer telephone support. They are run by volunteer mothers who have all had postnatal depression.

✪ **Time out for yourself** : mothers need to value themselves and take some time for themselves. Looking after a baby is a 24hr job, however, with a little planning, a small amount of time out, on a regular basis, will help. Some examples are:



a walk around the block

a cuppa with friends, without baby

a luxurious bath, uninterrupted

a meal out with your partner

time for gardening

time for craft or hobbies



None of these activities need to be expensive or highly organised, when done on a regular basis, mothers have reported that they feel much better.



✪ **Sharing the work** : accept all offers of help - do not feel guilty, you can always repay any kindness later. Remember, we all need help at some time in our lives. Let your family and friends know what you need - be specific about what will