

Caring for yourself

It's easy to find caring for a baby overwhelming, especially at first and it's easy to think no-one else can possibly be feeling like this. Many mothers say that they feel they are only 'just keeping my head above water' most of the time.

To care for a baby well, you need to care for yourself.

- * Don't expect to do everything 'right' - it's not possible.
- * Praise yourself for simple things.
- * Don't dwell on mistakes – learn from them.
- * Sometimes getting rest, or even just reading a magazine for 5 minutes of 'time out' is more important than doing the housework.
- * Be proud of the efforts you put in through the day, no matter how small the tasks.
- * Understand it's normal to feel swamped at times with a range of emotions.
- * Reward yourself with one thing a day that makes you feel good.
- * Make sure you have someone to talk to.
- * Make time for special moments with your partner or close friend.
- * Don't be afraid to ask for support and say "Yes" to offers of help.
- * Contact a professional person, e.g. doctor or health nurse if you feel that things are too overwhelming.

* Remember you are doing one of the most important things in life by caring for your baby!



Trust and believe in yourself

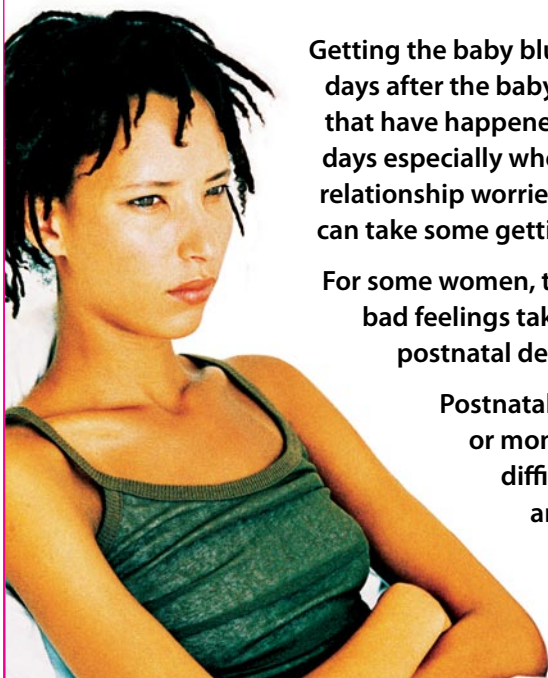
Many people give new parents advice and it's sensible to be open to ideas from others. Sometimes it can be difficult trying to work out what you think is best when family members have different ideas.

There is so much information available and it can often be confusing with different points of view.

Look at all the information, listen to other ideas and choose to do what feels right for you and your baby.

You know your baby best and you have the responsibility of making sure your baby has the best possible start.

The baby blues



Getting the baby blues can be common. Most women feel a bit weepy or blue a few days after the baby is born – this is normal and is caused by the enormous changes that have happened to your body. It's also normal for all women to have difficult days especially when you are tired, feeling overwhelmed, or have financial or relationship worries. Having a baby brings a huge change to your lifestyle, and this can take some getting used to.

For some women, these feelings become more than just a few bad days – the bad feelings take over and you may find it very difficult to cope. This is called postnatal depression.

Postnatal depression can occur soon after the birth or come several weeks or months down the track. It is very distressing and can make life very difficult but it can be treated and it is important to get support and help as soon as possible. If this is happening to you, talk to your doctor or health professional. If you urgently need someone to talk to, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Parentline on 132 055 – these lines are open 24 hours and are staffed by professionals who can help you.