

Tearful, Cheerful: Emotional Ups and Downs

Many new Moms have “baby blues”. Feeling sad and “blue” the first two weeks after giving birth is common. Why do many new Moms feel this way? Research tells us that there are many reasons for the mood swings that happen after a baby is born.

Many mothers deal with lots of changes and challenges after giving birth. Their body may feel sore after the work of labor. Their moods may change from feeling sad to happy and sad again. Many mothers feel tired from the demands of the baby and other family members. All these changes are normal for the first weeks after the birth of a baby.

Your body is trying to adjust to not being pregnant. Your hormone levels are returning to normal. Your sleep patterns are far from normal. Demands on your time and energy have changed. It is no wonder that you may not be feeling “yourself” yet. If you have emotional ups and downs after your baby is born, know that it is very normal reaction.

There are some things you can do to make it easier:

- Try to rest when your baby sleeps. When you're tired, things can seem overwhelming.
- Let your family and friends help with the baby and other household chores.
- Don't worry about how you “ought” to feel. How you feel is how you feel. Accept this and move on.
- Talk to other new mothers. It helps to know that others have the same feelings that seem so strange to you.
- Use the same stress-reduction methods as you used when you were pregnant. These include relaxation exercises, warm baths or showers, light exercise (as soon as your provider approves), or just taking a good long walk.

- Share your feelings with your partner. Together, you can find a way to let each other know how much you value each other.
- Talk with your provider. You may need special help if the signs are severe or if you have any thoughts of hurting yourself or your baby.

Ask your provider for more information about the “baby blues”. This information can help you better understand the changes you will go through the first few weeks after your baby is born.



Feeding the Baby

Newborn babies can be fed from the bottle or your breast. Ask your provider how often your baby needs to eat. It is important to make sure your baby is getting enough milk from your breast or bottle.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is best for your baby. Many experts recommend breastfeeding for the first 12 months but any time is better than none. There are many reasons to breastfeed your baby. Here are just a few:

- Breast milk has all the nutrients you baby needs for the first 6 months of life.
- Breast milk helps your baby fight infections.
- Breastfeeding helps you get back to your normal weight.

Breastfeeding gets easier after a few days. If you are having problems, talk to your provider or call the La Leche League. This is an organization that helps women with any breastfeeding problem. Call the national office at 1-800 LaLeche or 847-519-7730 or www.lalecheleague.org. Services offered by La Leche League are offered at no charge.

- Wash your hands before you breastfeed. Give your baby as much of the breast as possible when you feed the baby. Breastfeeding should not hurt. If it does, the baby may not be latching on right. Learn the different positions for feeding your baby. If one does not work, try another.
- Your baby will need to be breastfed at least 8 times per day. A baby should be fed every 2 to 3 hours.
- A breastfed baby will wet 6-8 diapers per day, and will be gaining weight. That many diapers means your baby is getting enough milk.
- Watch what you eat. Foods like chocolate, caffeine, and spicy foods can upset your baby's stomach. Also,

foods like beans and broccoli can cause gas pains in your baby's stomach.

- Do not take any medication unless the provider says it is OK. Some medications may pass through the breast milk to your baby.

Bottle Feeding

Some women can't or do not want to breastfeed. This is OK. You can give your baby formula. Here are some tips:

- Use baby formula and not cows' milk. Wash your hands before you mix the formula.
- Prepare formula the right way. Some formula comes ready mixed and others you need to add water. If you need to add water be sure to add the right amount. Too much water will make the formula weak and your baby will be hungry. Too little water will leave your baby with an upset stomach.
- Mixed formula needs to be kept cold in the refrigerator and used within 48 hours. Any formula left in the bottle after the baby has eaten should be thrown out.
- Bottles and nipples need to be kept clean. Wash bottles and nipples with soap and hot water. Rinse well.
- A baby needs to get 16-24 ounces of formula per day. Feed your baby 2-3 ounces at each feeding. Burp your baby after feeding 1 to 2 ounces. Your baby will need to eat every 2-3 hours.

Burping Your Baby

Babies take in air when they eat. This can give them a stomachache. Burp your baby after every 1 to 2 ounces of feeding. Gently rub or pat baby's back.



Newborn Help for Parents



A new baby brings lots of questions. How do I tell if my baby is sick? What do I do? How do I know if the baby is getting enough formula or milk? What do I do to keep my baby healthy? Read more about what to do to help your baby grow and stay healthy.



For more information about our health management programs call Molina Healthcare Member Services at the phone listed on your ID Card.

Also call our Nurse Advice Line when you have questions about your health:

1-888-275-8750; TTY: 1-866-735-2929

24 Hours a day, 7 days a week - everyday of the year!

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Message to Members

If you do not want the motherhood mattersSM newsletter sent to your home, just let us know. Please call Molina Healthcare Member Services at the phone number listed on your ID card.

All material in this newsletter is for information only. This does not replace your provider's advice. Ask your provider if you have questions.

Smoking and Pregnancy Do Not Mix

Would you like help to stop smoking? Molina Healthcare can help you. Call Molina Healthcare Member Services to learn about stop-smoking programs near you.

Don't Forget!

Make sure to get your baby his or her own health insurance. You can call us to get help with this process.

Molina Healthcare does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, national origin, disability or sex.

When and How to Call Your Provider



When something seems wrong with your baby, it can be scary. It's easy for first-time parents to worry about every sneeze and cough. In time, you'll learn how to tell the difference between real sickness and just a little snuffle. Call your provider if you have any questions or doubts.

This call can be a big help!

Crying is one good way your baby "talks" to you. Babies express their needs by crying. You will notice that your baby has many different cries. A baby can have a "hunger" cry, "wet" cry, or "give me attention" cry. Pick up your baby when he or she cries. It will make your baby feel loved and secure. It is not normal for a baby to cry all the time. A cry that sounds like a sharp cry of pain is also not normal. Call your provider if either of these things are going on. Other signs of illness are vomiting, diarrhea, rash, or a rectal temperature of more than 101 degrees. If your baby is less active than normal, it can be a sign of illness. A baby that lacks energy can be ill and this is sometimes a sign of serious illness.

Before you call your provider, write down what you notice about your baby. Use the checklist below to help you talk to the provider about how your baby is doing.

Use this checklist when you call.

- Temperature – How high is it? Was it taken under the arm or in the rectum?
- Skin color – A change in skin color?
- Vomiting/Diarrhea – How often has it happened?
- Cold Symptoms – Runny nose.
- Appetite – Is your baby eating normally? Are you breast or bottle feeding?
- Number of wet diapers – Babies should have 6-8 wet diapers per day.
- Crying/Irritability – How long has the baby been crying?
- Medicines taken by baby and mother.
- Exposure to disease such as chicken pox or measles.

Give your provider clear details. These are helpful any time you call your provider, but even more helpful when the call is after hours.

Your Baby Needs Well Exam Appointments and Shots with Their Provider

Well child exams with your baby's provider are very important. Well child exams make sure that everything is okay with your baby. It is also a good time for parents to ask questions about baby care. Your baby's first health check up should happen a few days to two weeks after birth. Your baby's provider will make sure your baby is healthy by:

- Checking your baby's growth – The provider will measure your baby's height and weight. The provider will also measure your baby's head to make sure it is growing well.
- Give your baby shots – These vaccines (shots) help protect your baby from serious illnesses. These include diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, influenza, whooping cough, mumps, measles, hepatitis A and B, and more. Vaccines are among the safest medicines. After a shot a child may have some pain and a mild fever. Ask your provider about what you can do to make your baby feel better when he or she gets a shot.
- Checking your baby's physical health – The provider will check to make sure your baby's sight and hearing are normal.

Your baby should get well child exams at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months and 1 year.



After Delivery SELF-CARE

Whether you had a vaginal delivery or a C-section you will notice many changes in your body. You may have some pain called "after pains". It can help to ask your provider what you can do to make yourself feel better. Here are some questions to ask: What can I take to help with the pain that I feel? I am having trouble going to the bathroom. What can I do? I have stitches from the episiotomy. What do I need to do?

If you had a C-sections

Incision care:

- Once you get home, a dressing over your incision is not needed.
- Let the incision be open to air or exposed for drying and healing.
- Showers are OK unless you are told otherwise.
- Avoid heavy lifting for six weeks.

If you had a vaginal delivery

Episiotomy care:

An episiotomy is a cut that is made at the opening of the vagina during the delivery of the baby. This is done to allow more room for the baby to come out. After the delivery your provider will stitch the cut. These stitches will not need to be removed. They will slowly dissolve after about 10 days. You may have some pain and swelling. This should feel better and hurt less each day.

Bleeding:

- For 2-6 weeks after delivery, all women will experience bleeding and discharge. This is normal.
- Do not use tampons for the first 6 weeks after delivery.
- The use of tampons may cause an infection.

Hemorrhoids:

Hemorrhoids are swollen veins in and around the rectum. It can make going to the bathroom painful after the birth of a baby. Use these tips to help:

- Drink plenty of water.
- Eat foods high in fiber like fruits and vegetables.
- Ask your provider about sitting in warm water. This is called a sitz bath.

- Ask your provider about medicated pads that can help soothe and shrink the hemorrhoids.

Other things to consider

Fatigue:

- You will be tired!
- Be sure to eat right and drink plenty of water.
- Take a nap or relax when your baby is sleeping.
- Continue to take prenatal vitamins and iron after delivery.

Resuming sexual relations after going home:

- You need to follow some rules. You will have bleeding and that means you are still healing. This makes you more likely to get vaginal infections.
- The best way to answer "When can you have sexual relations again?" is to ask your provider.

Postpartum Check-up

It may be hard to care for your own health while caring for your baby. It is crucial that you take good care of yourself. Your health is important too. So be sure to make an appointment for a postpartum check-up. This should be scheduled 3 to 8 weeks after your baby is born. If you had a C-section, please be aware that the two week incision check-up is not considered a postpartum check-up.

When to call your provider

Call your provider right away if you have any of the following:

- Vaginal Bleeding.
 - More than a heavy period, especially if there is a foul or strong odor.
 - If there is a gush of blood followed by clots.
- Pain.
- Fever of 100.4 or more.
- Breasts that become red and tender or look swollen (you could have an infection).
- Feelings of sadness that don't seem to go away.
- Fluid or drainage from an incision (could be a sign of infection).
- Changes in your urine or pain when you urinate (could be a bladder infection).