

**TOGE  
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# **TAKE NOTE**

**A FATHERS GUIDE TO  
POSTNATAL DEPRESSION**

THE  
*tired mama*  
COLLECTION

*The Yorkshire  
Pudding*

**TAKE  
NOTE**

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Joelle Byrne 2017  
Danielle Davies 2017

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## INTRODUCTION

Post Natal Depression (known as PND) is a term that we've all heard of, but do you really know exactly what it means?

According to the NHS, PND affects around 1 in 10 women, this statistic does not include women who do not seek professional help, so this statistic is very likely to be a lot higher. Post Natal Depression is not uncommon, you are not alone.

After welcoming a new baby, it is very common for new mums to become anxious, tearful and down. This phase is known as the "baby blues" and is completely normal. This phase does not usually last longer than around two weeks. If mum is still showing these signs then this may be a sign of Post Natal Depression. It is also important to understand that PND can begin anytime up to one year after giving birth. (See page 4 for signs to look out for)

For a PND sufferer, it can be difficult to ask for help, say how you feel or talk about what you need. The Take Note Plan is a "write it down" strategy that allows mum to express her needs and feelings, when she maybe finding it difficult to say it out loud. This is a no fuss, straight to the point self help strategy, designed to give dads direct instruction on how to help, hopefully tacking the feeling of uselessness and confusion.

## HOW TAKE NOTE WORKS

- Print off, "when you need me sheets" see page 3 (it maybe helpful to print off a large number so that you know you aren't going to run out anytime soon!)
- Sit down with your partner and show her the sheet; explain to her that you understand that it's really important to have strong communication and that these sheets are going to be in the house so that she's able to express her feelings or needs.
- Agree on a place to keep the sheets so that they are easily accessible, along with a pen.
- You also need to agree on a place in which the sheet can be left once filled out, so that you are able to see it straight away. This may be on the kitchen worktop, dining table, sofa, any area that's looked at regularly.
- It is then your responsibility to ensure that you've taken the time to find, read and respond to the sheet.

## SUPPORT

IT'S OUT THERE, HONEST!

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## READING

### UZZI REISS

How to Make a New Mother Happy: A Doctor's Guide to Solving Her Most Common Problems

### AMBER DUSICK

Parenting: Illustrated with Crappy Pictures

### OLIVIA SPENCER

Sad Dad: An Exploration of Postnatal Depression in Fathers

### JOELLE BYRNE

WTF - The Real Story. One family's battle with postnatal depression and how they came out the other side

## PAPA SPECIFIC

### FATHERS REACHING OUT

prevention, identification and treatment of these illnesses that affects millions of families

### FATHERHOOD.GOV

The National Responsible Fatherhood clearinghouse

### DAD.INFO

Advice and Support for Dads

### GREAT FATHERS (NZ)

Ordinary Men make great fathers

### POSTPARTUM PROGRESS

6 dads tell all about getting their wives through PNI

## INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

### PNI.ORG

A charity run by women who have experienced postnatal illness

### MIND

For better mental health

### MUMMY IT'S OK

Real life stories of maternal mental illness

### THE TIRED MAMA COLLECTION

Honest family blog

### NCT.ORG

Local networks of friendly faces and invaluable support.

### PANDAS FOUNDATION

Pre and Postnatal depression advice and support

### APNI

Association for postnatal illness

### TOMMY'S

Helpful information, blog posts and real stories

**TODAY**

WHEN YOU NEED ME

**TOGETHER**

GOOD DAY

INDIFFERENT

BAD DAY

CAN WE TALK?

CARRY ON AS NORMAL

I'D RATHER NOT TALK, I NEED SOME TIME FOR MYSELF

HUG ME

NO HUGS THANK YOU

YOU CAN HELP ME BY: \_\_\_\_\_

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## KNOWING

### SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR

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## PHYSICAL

- Panic attacks (can show themselves in many ways but usually involve increased heart rate, hot or cold sweats, extreme fear, sickness, general nausea and fainting)
- Pain that seems to have no reasonable explanation – stomach pain for example  
Headaches and blurred vision
- Difficulty concentrating or memory issues
- Low or non-existent sex drive
- Increase or decrease in appetite (Although it is worth noting that if you are breast feeding this can affect your appetite too)

## EMOTIONAL

- Loss of interest, no interest or angry feelings towards your new baby, partner, other children or those closest to you
- Other feelings that aren't quite "you" – lack of joy
- Feelings of not wanting to be left alone with your baby
- Excessive anxiety about the baby's well-being
- Not wanting to go out of the house or stay in the house
- Overwhelming feelings of sadness, hopelessness or despair
- Fear that you are a "bad mum" and may harm your baby or that your baby/partner/other children would be better off without you
- Considering harming yourself or those closest to you, including the baby
- Constant negative feelings and thoughts
- Feeling guilty about everything or something particular that you would not have felt before the baby arrived – including not loving your baby enough
- Irritable, tearful, angry or all three!

## **NEXT STEPS**

### **UNDERSTAND POSTNATAL DEPRESSION**

Take the time to research and find out how PND affects your partner both emotionally and physically. It is vital that you understand that PND is a not controllable; it is an illness that needs to help and support in order to make a full recovery. The more information you have, the more you will be able to help and understand what your partner is feeling.

### **TALK AND LISTEN**

When someone has PND it can be difficult for them to express how they feel. Inside they may be longing for someone to talk to, hold onto and ask for help, but getting the words out can be difficult. So many mums are left battling alone. The Take Note Strategy is designed to provide a straight to the point "write it down" method to help both Mum and Dad understand feelings and areas of help.

### **DECIDE ON SET JOBS AND ENCOURAGE MUM TO TAKE ON SMALL TASKS**

Decide between you what roles you can take on around the house to help. It's important not to do everything, this can be undermining, and take away the feeling of ability and power. It is important to encourage mum to do things when she's feeling up to it and praise her for doing so. It takes a lot of effort to start and finish a task on a bad day; by showing her that you understand this, it will really help mum feel supported and understood.

## **REMEMBER THAT THIS IS JUST TEMPORARY**

Post Natal Depression is not a permanent illness. With the right support many women make a full recovery. It is important to remember this, and to just take each day as it comes.

### **TAKE TIME OUT FOR YOURSELVES**

Looking after yourself it's so important. It is important that you have a healthy mind and body. You should both ensure that you take time out to socialise with your friends and have time outside of the home. This will help you stay focused and positive. It is important to remember that 1 in 25 new fathers also develop PND. Information and helplines can be found on page 2, just click the links to go straight to each website.