

Maternity

Mental health and emotional wellbeing after having a baby

Having a baby is an intense experience for both parents that can result in a wide range of feelings and behaviours such as happiness, expectation and excitement, tiredness, worrying and feeling tearful. Many women feel down, tearful or anxious in the first few days after giving birth. This is often called the "baby blues" and is so common it's considered normal – it shouldn't last for more than 2 weeks after the birth. These feelings can affect your experience of becoming a new parent and on your relationship with your partner and your baby. The range of mental health problems that women may experience or develop following the birth of a baby, are the same as at other times in her life. 1 in 5 women experience feeling worried, anxious or low in mood following the birth of their baby.

If you have a current mental health problem, or have had a previous mental health problem, you may experience a return or increase in your symptoms. Mental health problems are an illness like any other, so please talk to your midwife, health visitor or GP if you have any of these feelings. There is a wide range of help, support and treatment available to you. Treatment options may include "talking therapies", medication, self-help materials and exercise.

Some women who have a mental health problem stop taking their medication when their baby is born without seeking medical advice. This can result in a return or worsening of the symptoms they experience. You should not alter your medication without first seeking medical advice. There are medications that you can take whilst breast feeding. Please speak to your GP, midwife, mental health team or health visitor for advice.



Patient Information

If you have a current severe mental illness such as schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorders or have had a previous psychotic illness, you could experience a worsening or return of symptoms after their birth. This will require urgent treatment. You will receive close monitoring and support from a care co-ordinator either from a specialist perinatal mental health team or a community mental health team.

You will be asked about your emotional wellbeing at each contact after the birth of your baby with your midwife. These questions are asked to every new mother. The maternity team supporting you may find that you are at risk of developing a mental health problem. If this happens they will discuss with you options for support and treatment. You may be offered a referral to a mental health team, specialist midwife, GP or health visitor. If you are concerned about your thoughts, feelings or behaviour, you should seek help and advice. Further information can be found about mental health via www.england.nhs.uk/mental.health/perinatal/

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format, please contact us on 02476 967315 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

Document History	
Department:	Maternity
Contact:	27315
Updated:	December 2020
Review:	December 2022
Version:	1
Reference:	HIC/LFT/2545/20