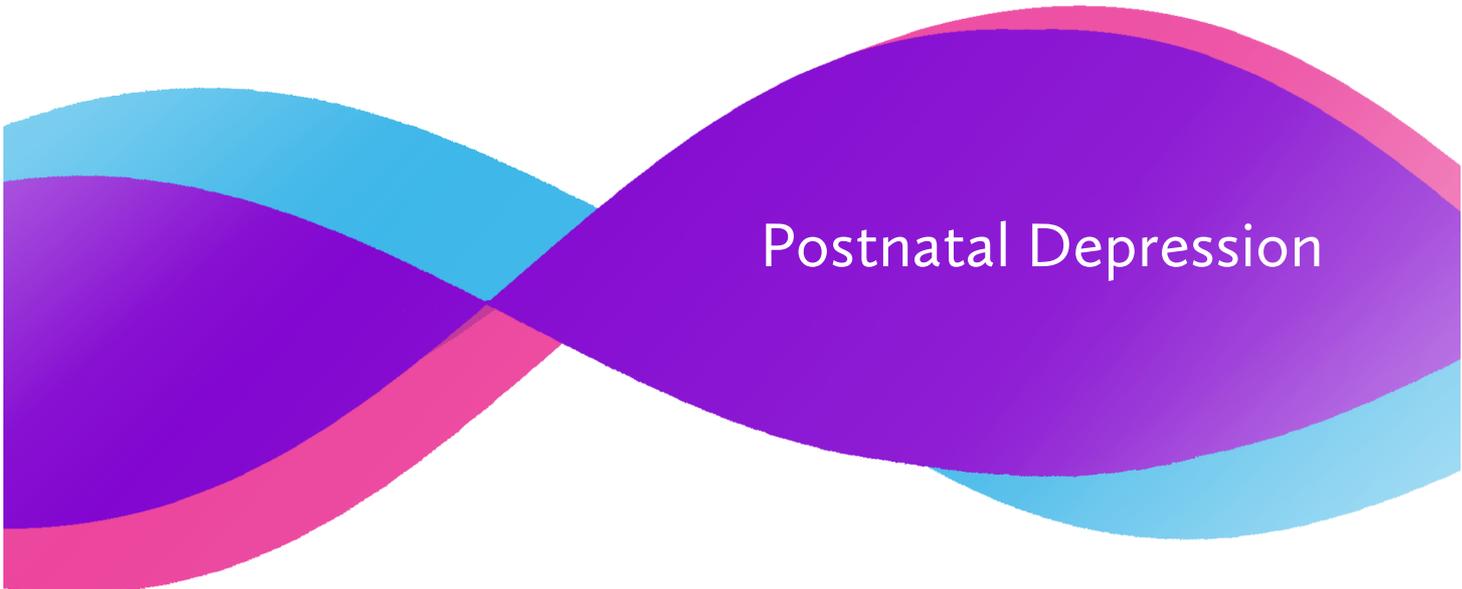




PANDAS

Pre and Postnatal Depression
Advice and Support



Postnatal Depression



Postnatal Depression

What is Postnatal Depression?

Postnatal Depression (often known as PND) is an illness that occurs within the first year after giving birth. It causes depressive symptoms such as low mood, confusion, and withdrawal from others.

PND can follow on from Prenatal Depression (depression during pregnancy), or it can occur on its own. It's different from the 'Baby Blues' (a feeling of low mood or tearfulness, that so often affects women in the first few weeks after giving birth that it's seen as normal), as PND symptoms are deeper, and more long term. If untreated, PND can have long term effects on the parent, or parents. It most often occurs 4-6 months after giving birth, although symptoms can begin any time.

Postnatal depression can also affect fathers, particularly occurring after a stressful or traumatic birth, and has many of the same symptoms and effects.

Symptoms of Postnatal Depression

Symptoms can vary, however these are some of the main symptoms seen:

Low Mood for a long period of time	Trouble sleeping/staying awake
Irritability	Tension symptoms (headaches)
Panic Attacks	Changes in appetite
Lack of Concentration or motivation	Reduced sex drive
Lack of interest in yourself and/or baby	Feeling useless, worthless or guilty
Feeling alone	Feeling overwhelmed
Thoughts of self harm or suicide	Intrusive Thoughts



Postnatal Depression cont.

What can Cause Postnatal Depression

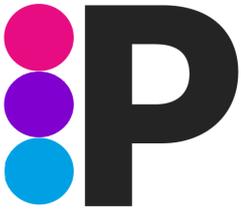
There is no single cause of Postnatal Depression. It's not clear why some people develop PND and other's don't, however there are certain risk factors which can make them more likely to experience the illness. These risk factors include:

- A history of depression, including previous PND
- Having had Prenatal Depression or other mental health problems during pregnancy
- A lack of Support Network (friends, family or partner)
- Stressful events
- Birth Trauma
- Socio-economic problems
- Loss or bereavement

It doesn't matter if you have not had PND with a previous child, or if you have none of the above risk factors. There is thought to be some link genetically – research has shown people whose sisters or mothers had PND are at an increased risk – but because there is no clear cause, it's hard to pinpoint why this is. Birth is also a life changing event in itself, regardless of whether the birth was medically simple or complex – and life changing events are, in themselves, sometimes a trigger for depression.

Having certain 'expectations' before having a baby that aren't fulfilled (such as sudden changes to your birth plan, being unable to breastfeed if you had planned to, or having the physical effects of a birth slow you down) can also be a risk, as can having to adapt to the demands of a new baby.

The main thing to remember, is the having Postnatal Depression is not your fault. It can affect anyone, from any background, and for any reason. It is an illness, and nothing to be ashamed of or embarrassed about. There are many different treatments, but the most important thing to do is speak to someone about how you are feeling.



Postnatal Depression cont.

Treatments for Postnatal Depression

It can be difficult to seek help for Postnatal Depression, and parents may delay speaking to their doctor or healthcare provider. However, it's really important to seek help as soon as possible, as without treatment PND can be a long term illness. GPs are much more aware now of the symptoms of Postnatal Depression, and are there to guide you and help you choose the most suitable treatment.

Some of the possible treatment options include:

Self Help (including Guided, Online, Support Groups)

Your GP can help by providing links to support services in your area, offering guided self help programs (books or online courses, often supported by a therapist), or referring you on to specialist teams.

Talking Therapies

Counselling, such as CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) or INPT (Interpersonal Therapy), may be offered depending on your area. These encourage you to talk through problems, and address either the cycle of thoughts and behaviours, or how your relationships with others may contribute towards your feelings. These

Antidepressants

Sometimes, antidepressants can be prescribed to help alleviate symptoms of depression. These work by balancing the chemicals in your brain to ease symptoms, which can help you to function while issues are worked through. There are antidepressants which are available while breastfeeding, however this should always be discussed with your doctor.

Specialist Mental Health Teams

For more severe PND, you may be put under care of a specialist team, such as a Community mental Health Team. They can help support your more intensively, or refer you on to other treatments if you are at risk – such as a mental health hospital, or a Mother and Baby Unit.



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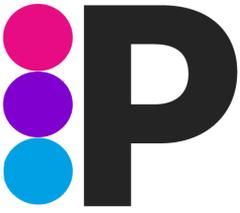
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Postnatal Depression cont.

Self Care for Postnatal Depression

Your family and friends can play a big part in helping your recovery. For them to be able to help, it is important you are honest with your friends and family about how you are feeling, and don't bottle up your emotions.

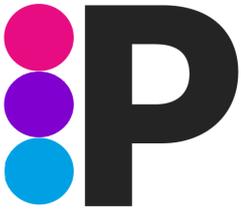
Allow other people to carry out small tasks for you - such as house work, taking your baby for a walk, or simply looking after your baby for one hour every other day, to allow you to do something you want. It is important you allow yourself to have some 'me time'.

Self-help groups can offer you good advice and support on how to cope with postnatal depression as well as comfort to know that other mums are feeling the same as you, hearing other individuals experiences of postnatal depression can be a huge benefit, as you will be able to discuss techniques on how to cope, and have an understanding of each other's feelings. PANDAS Support Groups offers just that, in a non-judgemental, safe environment.

The most important support aid you can have is being able to talk to someone and be honest about your feeling and emotions. Ensure you write down on a piece of paper or a notebook the numbers of people you can call when you are feeling your worst, and make sure the list is readily available, so if you feel you are becoming aggressive, upset, angry or anxious you can call someone and no that you are not on your own.

You can add PANDAS Help Line on your list 0843 28 98 401, and we will always be here to listen.

PANDAS Foundation also offers support via email, our website, PANDAS Help Line and PANDAS Support Groups.



How PANDAS Can Help

What We Do

PANDAS offers Advice, Support, and a Voice to those with Postnatal Mental Illnesses. We are available online, in person via Support Groups, and via our Helpline.

PANDAS Helpline: 0843 28 98 401

Our helpline is open everyday between 9am-8pm. The PANDAS Helpline is manned by a team of trained volunteers who will be happy to chat to you and direct you to the right support for you.

Email Support: info@pandasfoundation.org.uk

Our PANDAS Email Support team are available seven days a week, 365 days a year. Our trained volunteers aim to respond to each email within 24 hours. Please get in touch if you'd like any more information regarding perinatal mental illness, or are looking for support for yourself or your partner, friend or colleague.

Social Media Pages

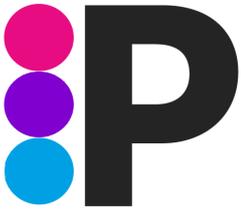
Our PANDAS Social Media team are online seven days a week, keeping you inspired, motivated and informed with current news and reports on perinatal mental health.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PANDASfoundation

Twitter & Instagram: [@pandas_uk](https://twitter.com/pandas_uk)

Support Groups

Our PANDAS Support Groups offer a fantastic opportunity to meet up with other parents affected by perinatal mental illness. Our team of PANDAS Support Group Leaders are on hand to provide information about local activities and services, whilst also offering support and advice.



Get in Touch

Media Enquiries: mediateam@pandasfoundation.org.uk

General Inquiries: contact@pandasfoundation.org.uk

Support Groups: support.groups@pandasfoundation.org.uk

Email Support: info@pandasfoundation.org.uk

Helpline: 0843 28 98 401

Office: 01691 664275