

Different Shades of Blue

IN CONSULTATION WITH DR CORNELIA CHEE, HEAD & SENIOR CONSULTANT,
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

A period of low mood after the birth of a baby is a common phenomenon that happens because of natural hormonal changes. However, if the condition does not abate, it could be a sign of a more serious postpartum disorder.

<p>The baby blues are caused by natural hormonal changes after birth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Irritability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fatigue <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sadness 	<p>It goes away about two weeks after delivery</p>
<p>Postpartum depression is a more intense and chronic form of the baby blues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Irritability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fatigue <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sadness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anger 	<p>These feelings carry on long after the initial two weeks</p>
<p>Postpartum anxiety manifests in the form of constant worry that disrupts sleep and daily life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inability to relax <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hypervigilance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Overwhelming fear or dread 	<p>and can last for months or years. Both these conditions can occur at the same time.</p>

Seek help!

If any of these feelings last **longer than two weeks**, are getting worse and are making it hard to complete everyday tasks, it is important to seek help and support.

If left untreated, these conditions **severely affect the ability to care for yourself and your child**. They can also progress into a lifelong bout with mental illness.

Sometimes, having someone to talk to or give you a break from baby duties can make a big difference.

