

Life As a New Mum



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You are overwhelmed with the arrival of your new bundle of joy, however you also feel like you have never been so tired in your life. This is probably how all mothers feel, from Beirut to Beijing! We wish you a great experience in your parenting journey. Remember, it only happens a few times, so try to make the best of it! And read below in order to be better prepared for any mood swings you may experience.

Resting

Babies have different time clocks than adults. A typical newborn awakens about every three hours and needs to be fed, changed, and comforted. Especially if this is your first baby, you can become overwhelmed by exhaustion which affects your mood/well-being. Although a solid eight hours of sleep for you may not happen again for several months, you need to find ways to get more rest now.

- Try to be relieved of responsibilities other than feeding the baby and taking care of yourself during the first few weeks – as much as possible.
- Sleep when the baby sleeps. This may be only a few minutes of rest several times a day, but these minutes can add up.
- Feel free to excuse yourself from visiting friends and family to go for a nap or to feed your baby. New mothers should not feel obligated to entertain.

- Get physical for a few minutes each day. You can begin walking and doing postpartum exercises, as advised by your health care provider, this will help you regain your energy.

The Stress of Having a Baby

No matter how well-prepared you are, when you deliver, life will definitely take a new path for you. So if you're still in your night



clothes till the afternoon or haven't had time to eat a bite, rest assured you aren't alone. It happens to most new mums.

Striving for perfection is a major source of stress for moms: one in four mothers says that the pressure she puts on herself to be perfect is a top cause of stress. Recovering from birth, meeting the needs of the newborn baby, and adjusting to the new life are huge life stressors that you will be facing. Just take it step by step, don't aim for perfection, and it will fall into place once a routine settles, after baby grows a little. In summary, yes, having a baby does add stress to your life, but you will soon learn to deal with it, so breathe deep and take it easy!

Keeping Your Sanity

All parents have moments when they feel they cannot give one more feed, change one more diaper, pick up one more pile of washed clothes, or hear one more music play of "Old McDonald." Relaxation time for you is small and precious, however, even a small escape will do you lots of good. A few ideas are:

1. Taking a long, bubbly, scented bath with candles
2. Getting a manicure, a pedicure, a massage, a facial, or a new hairdo
3. Reconnecting with dad on a small date
4. Relaxing over coffee with a friend
5. Having a physical workout session, or even a walk, that will make you feel you are taking care of your body
6. Arranging to have uninterrupted sleep while someone is taking care of baby
7. Shopping for new clothes/ac-

- cessories for yourself or exchanging some baby gifts
8. Taking time alone such as watching a movie, reading a book, doing your favorite hobby or spending time alone which will help you reconnect with yourself
 9. Planting a flower or even a garden, this may relax you even more than other leisure activities.

Bonding With Your Baby

For some parents, the feeling of bonding with your child comes within the first few days - or even minutes - of birth. For others, it may take longer. Don't worry. Parent-baby bonding is complicated and often takes time to develop. Psychologists warn that there's so much discussion about bonding with a new baby that mothers often feel guilty if they don't feel some incredible attachment to their new baby immediately. But bonding is an individual experience, which can develop over a period. Placing baby skin-to-skin right after delivery while still in the delivery room has shown to enhance the bonding experience between you two. As you get to know your baby and learn how to soothe him/her and enjoy his/her presence, your feelings will deepen.

If, after a few weeks, you find that you don't feel more attached to and comfortable with your baby than you did on the first day, or if you actually feel detached from him/her, resentful of him/her or very anxious about him/her, talk to your family doctor or health visitor. Postnatal depression is a real illness that can delay bonding, and it's best to seek help as soon as possible.



Baby Blues

Approximately 50% of women experience at least a small form of baby blues a few days after delivery.

Some of the baby blues symptoms include:

- Sadness
- Fatigue
- Hopelessness
- Low self-esteem
- Guilt
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Social withdrawal
- Thoughts of harm coming to the baby

Although a number of risk factors have been identified, the causes of baby blues are not well understood. Many women recover on their own, while others need a treatment consisting of counseling combined with medication. Early identification and intervention improves long-term success for most women.

For more information, or for any mood swings, refer to:

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