

# Father's Postpartum Depression

## ► What is father's (paternal) postpartum depression or PPD?

PPD is Major Depressive Disorder that develops during the perinatal period and affects approximately 10% of new fathers. This is a serious condition growing in recognition throughout our society and the medical community

## ► What are the signs and symptoms of PPD?

- Hopeless/Feelings of despair
- Low mood or lack of interest or pleasure
- Appetite changes
- Weight fluctuation
- Poor sleep/exhaustion
- Guilt
- Irritability or anger

## ► What causes PPD?

As with maternal PPD there is no one single cause. Parenting can bring about a number of changes to a father's everyday life and relationships which begin before the child is even born. Factors such as mother's depression symptoms, stressful marital relationships, unemployment, and low social support from family and friends contribute to the development of depression.

## ► What are the effects of PPD?

A father's depression can have a significant impact on not only their own health but, the health of their entire family.

PPD is associated with:

- ✓ Lower ability of father to provide empathy and support to the family
- ✓ Poorer parenting practices
- ✓ Less attention to baby's health and well-check visits/advice
- ✓ Higher risk of behavioral problems in preschool-aged children
- ✓ Children with more physical and mental health problems
- ✓ Stressful family and marital relationships

## ► Helping fathers

If a father has symptoms of depression, referral to a mental health professional is recommended for evaluation and treatment. Referrals may also be made to local supportive services. Recognizing depression early can help fathers feel relief, and experience the joys of parenthood sooner.

## RESOURCES

- AFP. (Photographer). (2012). *Fathers are humans too*. [Web Photo]. Retrieved from <http://blogs.tribune.com.nk/story/14668/fathers-are-humans-too>
- Davis, R.N., et al. (2010). Fathers' Depression Related to Positive and Negative Parenting Behaviors With 1-Year-Old Children. *Pediatrics*.
- Hibbert, C. [Web log message]. Retrieved from <http://www.drchristinahibbert.com/postpartum-depression-men-the-facts-on-paternal-postnatal-depression/>
- Schumacher, M., Zubaran, C., & White, G. (2008). Bringing birth-related paternal depression to the fore. *Women and Birth, 21*(2), 65-70. doi: 10.1016/j.wombi.2008.03.008

