



**Self care**



**Easy English**

**Hard words**

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|  | This book has some hard words. |

The first time we write a hard word

* the word is in **blue**
* we write what the hard word means.

**You can get help with this book**

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|  | You can get someone to help you* read this book
* know what this book is about
* find more information.
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**About this book**

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|  | This book is written by theDepartment of Health. |

This book is about **self care** for parents.

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|  | **What is self care?**Self care means you look after yourself. |

**Sleep**

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|  | To help you get enough sleep* go to bed at the same time each night
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|  | * make your bedroom a place you can relax
* have naps for 20 minutes in the day when

your baby is asleep. |

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|  | Before bed do **not*** exercise
* use your phone
* drink coffee
* have naps late in the day. **Exercise**
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Make a time for exercise once every day.

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|  | Exercise might mean* a walk outside with the pram
* yoga.
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**Eat healthy food**

Make sure you



* eat healthy snacks in the day
* drink water when you are thirsty
* make easy meals on busy days. For example, eggs or a toasted sandwich.

**Make friends**

To help you meet new people you can



* join a new parent group or play group
* go to events in your local community
* join a group on social media.

**Be nice to yourself**

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|  | It is normal to feel upset or scared sometimes.It can help to* talk to someone you trust
* plan things you can do to feel better.
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|  | **Talk to your partner**A new baby can change your relationship with your partner.It might be hard to get along with your partner. For example, you might* **not** agree about how to share the jobs and house work
 |

* worry about how to be a good parent



* have less time to do nice things together. Talk to your partner about your problems first.



If you are still worried about your relationship you might talk to a **relationship counsellor**.



A relationship counsellor is an expert who can

help you and your partner work out problems.

**Why is self care important?**



Self care can help you

* feel good
* be healthy
* be a good parent.

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|  | You can use self care any time. For example* when your baby is asleep
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|  | * when someone else looks after your baby.
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|  | **Your mental health**There are many changes to your life after you have a baby.Changes to your mental health are normal.**Baby blues** |

**Baby blues** means you feel sad after your baby is born. For example



* you feel tired
* you cry a lot
* you are grumpy
* your mood changes often.

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|  | Baby blues* are normal
* happen in the first few days after you have your baby
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* go away after a few days.

**Postnatal anxiety**

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|  | **Post natal anxiety** means you* worry about things most of the time
* worry that you might do things wrong all the time
* find it hard to sleep.
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You might have **panic attacks**.

Panic attacks might mean



* you feel like things are out of control
* everything feels like it is too much
* your heart beats fast or you might find it



hard to breathe.

**Postnatal depression**



**Postnatal depression** means you

* feel sad most of the time
* can **not** cope with things
* can **not** think straight.

You might find it hard to

* eat

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|  | * sleep
* focus.
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|  | Postnatal depression* can happen in the first year after you have your baby
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* can last 1 - 2 years if you do **not** get help.

**Are mental health problems common?**

1 in 7 mothers get postnatal depression.



1 in 10 fathers get postnatal depression.

You might be more likely to get postnatal depression if

* you have had depression or anxiety before
* someone in your family has mental health problems
* you feel tired or do **not** get enough support
* you use drugs or alcohol
* there are big changes to your life.

For example, you move house.

**Help for postnatal depression**

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|  | Postnatal depression happens less if you* use self care
* think about things in a positive way
* have people around that care for you
* ask for help when you need it.
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|  | **It is okay to get help**There is nothing wrong with asking for help.You are **not** a bad person if you feel sad after you have a baby.Lots of people get help for postnatal depression. |

There is information about safe ways to get help at the end of this book.

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|  | **Where to get help** |

If you are worried about mental health you can call the Maternal and Child Health Line.



The helpline is open 24 hours per day and 7 days per week.

Call 13 22 29.

You can contact your

* Maternal and Child Health Nurse
* doctor
* counsellor or psychologist.



**Beyond Blue**

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|  | Go to the Beyond Blue website<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/mental-health/parenting>  |
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**Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia or PANDA**

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|  | Call 1300 726 306The help line is* free
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|  | * open Monday to Friday from 9 am to 7.30 pm.
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Website

[www.panda.org.au](http://www.panda.org.au)

**Centre of Perinatal Excellence or COPE**

Website

[www.cope.org.au/new-parents/postnatal-mental-health-conditions/postnatal-mental-health-factsheets-resources/](http://www.cope.org.au/new-parents/postnatal-mental-health-conditions/postnatal-mental-health-factsheets-resources/)

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|  | **Help for dads**Relationship Australia website[supportforfathers.com.au/resources](http://supportforfathers.com.au/resources)  |

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|  | Raising Children website [raisingchildren.net.au](http://raisingchildren.net.au)  |

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|  | COPE website[cope.org.au/readytocope](http://cope.org.au/readytocope) Beyond Blue website.[www.beyondblue.org.au/About/](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/About/) **Clinical care**You can get special help from hospitals for serious mental health problems.Website[vahi.vic.gov.au/mental-health-services/](https://vahi.vic.gov.au/mental-health-services)  |
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|  | **More information**For more information contact the Department of Health. |

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|  | Website[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/ healthyliving/Child-health-0-6](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/Child-health-0-6)  |

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|  | **If you need help to speak or listen**You can use the National Relay Service orNRS if you need help to make a call. |

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|  | Call the NRS help desk1800 555 660 |

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|  | Go to the NRS website[www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs](http://www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs%20)  |

To receive this publication in an accessible format email Maternal and Child Health and Early Parenting: MCH@health.vic.gov.au.



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