



ARC Mental Health Information Series

This document is intended to be information only and does not replace the opinion of a health provider.

Paternal Postpartum Depression

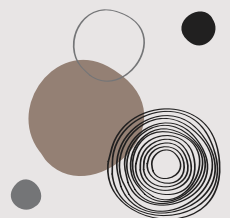
Up to 10% of new fathers develop postpartum depression during the first year after the birth of a child from a combination of factors including a change in identity and a hormonal shift. Paternal postpartum depression is 50% more likely to develop if their partner is experiencing a postpartum mood disorder.



Testosterone, a hormone that increases a father's sensitivity to their infant's crying and aids in attachment, tends to decrease over the course of pregnancy and studies have linked low testosterone to depression.

Symptoms

- Withdrawing socially
- Trying to focus more on work or other distractions
- Consistent fatigue and low energy
- Feeling unmotivated
- Loss of interest in hobbies and regular activities
- Changes in sleep, weight and appetite
- Alcohol and substance abuse
- Headaches and stomach aches
- Feeling easily stressed or frustrated
- Violent or aggressive behaviour
- Impulsive and risky behaviour
- Anger and irritability
- Negative parenting behaviours (for example, excessive yelling or hitting)
- Partner abuse/violence
- Suicidal ideation and/or action



Risk factors

- History of anxiety or depression
- Increased stress levels
- Lower socioeconomic status
- Mother/father relationship less than 2 years old
- Partner depression
- Poor mother/father relationship
- Poor sleep quality for mother and/or father
- Poor social support after birth
- Preterm infant/infant in neonatal intensive care unit
- Unintended pregnancy
- Witnessing a near-miss event at birth (such as postpartum hemorrhage or infant shoulder dystocia)

Treatment and lifestyle changes

- Medication
- Individual therapy such as Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, couples counselling
- Parenting skills classes
- Support groups

Self-help practices include:

- Regular exercise
- Healthy eating
- Getting enough sleep
- Meditating
- Journaling
- Practicing yoga or mindfulness
- Connecting with other men who have experienced parenting for advice

Resources available

Postpartum Support International offers online support groups for parents with perinatal mood disorders and a support hotline – 1 (800) 944-4773, www.postpartum.net

Psychosocial support available at your local CLSC and through your primary care physician.

CLSC St-Hubert (450) 443-7400

CLSC Richelieu (450) 658-7561

CLSC Brossard (450) 445-4452

811 Info-Sante, press 9 for English

CLSC St-Jean-sur-Richelieu (450) 358-2572



Financial contribution from



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

