

What is postnatal depression?

Symptoms of depression include:

- Feeling sad, irritable or unhappy most of the time
- Loss of pleasure or interest in work, hobbies or things that used to be enjoyed.
- Significant weight loss or gain
- Difficulty sleeping or over-sleeping nearly every day
- Feeling restless or slowed down
- Fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day
- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt
- Difficulties concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide

If you have experienced several of these symptoms nearly every day for a period of 2 weeks or more, you may be experiencing depression.

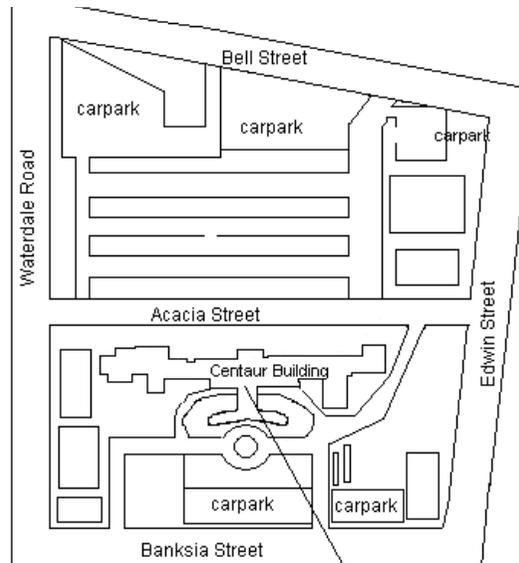
The symptoms of postnatal depression are no different to the symptoms of depression at other times during one's life. They can happen immediately and suddenly after the birth of a baby, or develop gradually over the first year.

Depression is treatable.

About PIRI

The Parent-Infant Research Institute (PIRI[®]) is a vigorous and innovative Australian research institute focussing on understanding, developing and applying treatments to improve parent and infant well-being. PIRI[®] believes that early intervention is the key to better outcomes for families.

Where are we?



PIRI[®]

**Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital
1st Floor, South Wing
Centaur Building**

Parking

Parking is available on the hospital grounds for a small fee or free parking is available on the side streets off Banksia St.

Adjusting to Parenthood

Group-based treatment for postnatal depression: Promoting the relationship between mother and baby



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Adjusting to Parenthood Can Be a Challenge

- Have you been feeling flat, sad or depressed?
- Are you struggling to cope with your baby?
- Do you feel anxious or overwhelmed by the task of parenting an infant?
- Do you find that you no longer get enjoyment from things?
- Do you feel less confident in yourself?

This program might be what you need!

Struggling with the transition to parenthood and all its demands can be a difficult experience. Feeling depressed, anxious or irritable may also interfere with your relationship with your infant.



What assistance will I receive?

All women who participate in this study receive treatment for postnatal depression in the **Getting Ahead of Postnatal Depression** 12-session cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) group program developed to improve maternal mood. Each session is approximately 1.5 hours.

Women learn the following coping strategies to help manage their moods:

Behavioural strategies

- Understanding and managing my mood
- Pleasant activities – How can I find the time?
- Relaxation on the run
- Assertiveness and self-esteem – telling others what I think and how I feel

Cognitive strategies

- Unrealistic expectations of parenting – influences from the past
- Developing a more helpful thinking style – increasing positive thoughts and decreasing negative thoughts
- Challenging my inner critical voice

In addition, three couple sessions are held, usually in the evenings. These provide information and support for partners (or another support person). We usually include 6-8 women in a group.

What about my baby?

We know that promoting joyful interactions between mother and baby is important after an episode of depression. This is part of the treatment for postnatal depression and is included in this study in the form of a traditional playgroup (“**Playtime**”) that many mothers and babies enjoy or in the form of an educational program that also includes play (“**HUGS**”, which stands for Happiness, Understanding, Giving & Sharing).

Women who participate in this study will be randomly allocated to receive either the 4-session HUGS program or the 4-session Playtime playgroup following the Getting Ahead of Postnatal Depression program.

The aim of this study is to compare the relative effectiveness of the HUGS program to the Playtime playgroup for enhancing the relationship

between mother and baby following treatment for postnatal depression.

Treatment is free of charge to eligible participants.

Questionnaires & Assessments

Participants are asked to complete questionnaires/assessments at four time points over 9 months. Participants will be reimbursed \$25 for their time at each of the three follow-ups.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to participate, you must:

- suspect that you are suffering from depression (we will conduct an assessment to determine eligibility)
- be 18+ years of age
- have a baby aged less than 9 months
- not currently be receiving treatment for depression (medication or therapy)
- be English speaking

What Women Have Said About Our Programs

“I was anxious about attending at first, but being in a supportive environment really helped me to get the most out of the program”.

“We are just normal people going through some things together. I realise that it’s mostly my issues not the baby’s, but that they affect her”.

“Because I feel better about myself, I’m able to be more available and loving with my baby”.

“I noticed an improvement in my mood after a couple of sessions and I became stronger over time”.

“It was good to get together with people who have experienced some issues. I could not identify with other mother’s group; everyone seemed to be coping so well, I felt different”.