

TOP WAYS NEW MOMS CAN PAMPER THEMSELVES ON MOTHERS DAY

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U *CSD Experts: 80 Percent Of Women Experience 'Baby Blues' Shortly After Giving Birth*
According to the California Teratogen Information Service (CTIS) Pregnancy Health

Information Line, a statewide non-profit that educates women about exposures during pregnancy and breastfeeding, about 80 percent of new moms experience what's known as the "baby blues." The baby blues typically affect a woman three to five days after giving birth and can last for up to ten days, with symptoms that include unexplained crying, irritability and sadness.

"Women with questions about depression during and after pregnancy are some of the most common callers to our information line," said Christina Chambers, PhD, MPH, professor of pediatrics and director of the CTIS Pregnancy Health Information Line, which is based at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine. "That's why it's so important new moms take some time for themselves after giving birth and what better time to remind them of that than during Mother's Day," she added.

- → **Get outdoors, smell the flowers and enjoy the Spring** - Have sun in your area? Boost your vitamin D with a 15 – 30 minute walk. "In one study, being outside for about 30 minutes in the peak day time produced 1000 I.U.'s of vitamin D," explained Sonia Alvarado, a CTIS Pregnancy Health Information Line supervising counselor. "Several studies, including a recent one out of Loyola University in Chicago, have suggested that Vitamin D lifts mood," she added.
- → **Sleep** - We know this isn't easy for any new parent, however, getting quality sleep to help you focus on your needs, as well as the baby's, is crucial. According to Alvarado, a 2009 Norwegian study found sleep disturbances and subjective sleep quality were the aspects of sleep most strongly associated with depression shortly after a woman gave birth. "Difficulty falling or staying asleep even when the baby is sleeping is an important sign of depression or anxiety," added Katie P. Hirst, MD, a reproductive psychiatrist and director of the UC San Diego Health System Maternal Mental Health Clinic. "I encourage women with pregnancy or postpartum insomnia to talk to their health care provider."

- → **Speak your mind** - “Please cook me dinner.” “I need a night off.” Reach out to your partner, girlfriends and sisters/brothers for help with your new baby, so you can get some rest or take time for yourself in general. If they can’t watch the baby, they may be able to cook you a few meals, clean your house, massage your back or just keep you company.
- → **Take a mental vacation** - A lot of new mothers simply can’t get away. That doesn’t mean you can’t be creative! Take these steps for a mental vacation: Using all of your senses, close your eyes and visualize where you would like to be. For example, walking along a beach near the ocean. Smell the ocean. Feel the breeze on your face. Listen to the sounds of the waves. Practice meditation breathing. Taking five to 10 minutes a few times per day, can help you take a mental vacation from those baby blues.

While many new moms fall into the category of typical “baby blues,” about 15 to 20 percent suffer from post-partum depression, which often carries more severe symptoms and requires immediate medical attention. For more information on post-partum depression and its treatments, contact your doctor or visit www.postpartum.net .

Questions or concerns about anti-depressants or other medications to treat depression during pregnancy or breastfeeding can be directed to CTIS Pregnancy Health Information Line counselors at (800) 532-3749. Outside of California, please call CTIS’ national affiliate, the Organization of Teratology Information Specialists, at (866) 626-6847.

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