

The **PPMD** Connection



News from the Peel Postpartum Mood Disorder Committee

PPMD Update

Free Online Tutorial

If you work with new and expectant mothers you need to be aware of PMD and the different ways in which symptoms may be presented.

You also need strategies to help you talk to women and families about PMD and be familiar with local community resources.

The new interactive PMD tutorial can help you address all of these needs and only takes about 1 hour to complete

Access the tutorial at pmdinpeel.ca



Coordinator's Corner

Spring 2009

A great big thanks to everyone who joined us at the PMDinPeel.ca website launch events in March. The events were held at the Brampton and Mississauga libraries and were huge successes with over 100 guests in attendance. We heard from two very brave women who shared their personal experiences with PMD. A consistent theme from both Jennifer and Navia was that they each experienced stigma as a result of PMD which caused them to keep their struggle to themselves. This reinforces the need for service providers to ask pregnant women and new mothers about their emotional health, letting them know it's safe to talk about it and that they are not alone.



I have had some very positive feedback from many of you about the website and how useful it is in your work with families. I appreciate hearing about how to keep enhancing the site, so that it continues to be a useful resource.

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Are You Sleeping When Baby Sleeps? Fatigue & PMD

Fatigue can be both a symptom of depression and a cause. The relationship between fatigue and depression is often a "chicken-and-egg" question since we can't always tell which came first. Fatigue is often a clue that something is wrong, particularly when a mom cannot sleep even when her baby is sleeping. Therefore, an important question to ask new moms is;

"Are you sleeping when baby sleeps?"

Research has shown that new moms sleep less and are awake about 20% more in the first six weeks after the baby is born and that a sleep loss of more than 30 minutes can affect daytime functioning and social interactions. The onset of depressive symptoms during the first eight weeks postpartum is strongly tied to the baby's sleeping patterns, fatigue in the mother and sleep deprivation. Poor sleep quality can often predict the severity of PMD symptoms and some research has shown that improving baby's sleep improves the mother's depressive symptoms. *(Continued on next page)*

Steering Committee Members: Best Start Health Coalition in Peel • Caledon Parent /Child Centre • Centre for Addiction and Mental Health • Credit Valley Hospital • Mississauga Parent Child Resource Centre • Infant and Child Development Services Peel • Peel Children's Centre • Peel Public Health • Punjabi Community Health Services • Success By 6 Peel • Vita Centre



Exercise Improves Mood

Many studies have demonstrated that exercise improves mood because it decreases stress and improves self efficacy, a person's sense of competence and ability to make positive changes in their lives. Exercise increases endorphins that stimulate the "feel good" centre in the brain. Twenty to thirty minutes of moderate exercise, 2 to 3 times a week is often enough to achieve this mood altering effect and has been shown to occur quickly.

The one challenge with exercise is getting mothers to do it. When they are depressed it is probably the last thing they feel like doing. Exercise in a group setting can help mother's stick to it and also provide social support. Studies have shown that depressed women who join "strollercize" (walking and running with their baby in the stroller) felt less depressed immediately after they exercised. It is important for mothers to speak with their doctor before starting to exercise as most women are advised to wait for at least 6 weeks before starting, especially after a C-section. Some other suggestions for mothers include going for a walk, bike ride, swim, and dancing to music. If a mother understands that exercise can help improve her mood, it may motivate her to stick with it. Kendall-Tackett, K. (2008). *Clinics in Human Lactation. Non-Pharmacological Treatments for Depression in New Mothers.* Dalfen, A. (2009) *When Baby Brings the Blues*

Resources

[PostpartumMen](#) is a website for men with concerns about depression, anxiety or other problems with mood after the birth of a child. It promotes self-help, hosts an online forum for dads to talk to each other, offers resources and gathers new information about men's experiences postpartum.

[The Postpartum Pact](#) is a tool developed by Karen Kleiman, author of *What Am I Thinking: Having another Baby after Postpartum Depression* to help women with planning for potential PMD

New book about PMD

Heather Armstrong. *It Sucked and then I Cried: How I Had a Baby, A Breakdown and a Much Needed Margarita.* Read [review](#)

Fatigue and PMD *(continued from first page)* Tips for getting more sleep

- Encourage mom to ask for practical help to care for baby from her partner, family and friends so she can get some much needed sleep
- Suggest she sleep and have her partner or family member bring the baby to her when he wakes for feedings
- Look for solutions; for example, divide the night in half into two shift so the woman is able to get a decent amount of sleep while her partner is responsible, then switch roles
- Suggest she ask if she can lengthen her stay in hospital after baby is born as this has been proven to decrease the risk for PMD
- Encourage her to limit visitors so that she can rest
- Explain that although nighttime sleep has been shown to be the most effective in replacing sleep debt, a nap may help her to re-energize
- Support breast-feeding, since studies show that women who breast-feed receive 45 more minutes of sleep per night compared to women who used formula. *Article contributed by Ashley Grieco York University Nursing student*

Did you know?

- Women who give birth to more than 1 infant at a time have a 43% greater risk of developing postpartum depression than those who give birth to one baby.
- Only 27%, of all mothers who had depressive symptoms had talked to a healthcare provider about the problem.

It is important for service providers to be aware of these findings and use them as an opportunity to educate, screen, and refer women to mental-health services. *Pediatrics.* 2009; 123:1147-1154. [Abstract](#)