

BabyCues

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a blue and green plaid shirt, is holding a baby. The baby is wearing a yellow long-sleeved shirt and a green hat. They are positioned in front of a large window with multiple panes, through which a blurred outdoor scene is visible. The lighting is soft and natural, coming from the window.

emotional changes



Hello!

It's lovely to have you here

I'm Philippa Murphy

I'm an awarded Infant Gut Health Practitioner, colic and reflux specialist, postnatal practitioner, educator, speaker, author, Mum, step-mum, detail attentive newborn and infant activist, meditator, quantum physics lover, dabbling artist and creator. Oh, I'm also a self-described advocate for common sense, I love all things nature, the colour green, and my morning coffee.

With a background in Child Development and Psychology, and being a Certified Lactation Consultant, and a Nutritional Health Coach, I'm a keen advocate

for preventative intervention through education. One of my main commitments for holistic child, and parent health, is to provide education that is focused on eliminating the unnecessary symptoms of colic and reflux from our world. Yes that can be done, and by natural means. It's what I love to do.

I also cherish any opportunity to empower parents with knowledge that will enhance confidence, so their intuitive care, and love, can develop in the best way possible. The tips in this guide are a little slice of the empowerment that I wish for you.

Congratulations! You have birthed your baby, and are probably now trying to learn so much at once, and settle into your new you. Not an easy task as a new Mum at times. While your baby arriving brings so much joy, your hormonal changes will most likely have you on a rollercoaster of emotions. From feeling euphoric and energised to being tearful, sad and lethargic. What is important during this time is that you can recognise what is natural, along with when to call on yourself, partner or friends for more support. Something we all need.

This booklet takes you through the possible maternal health conditions that can occur, covering:

- Baby Blues
- Postnatal or Postpartum Depression
- Postnatal or Postpartum Anxiety
- Postnatal or Postpartum Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Postnatal or Postpartum Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Postnatal or Postpartum Psychosis.

You will also find a test that you can do at anytime to ascertain whether you are experiencing Postnatal Depression. So let's get started.

Baby Blues

80% of women get baby blues, and the symptoms for this disappear a few weeks after birth. This hormonal time is all about hormones recalibrating as they get used to the next stage of producing milk, and letting go of any remaining debris in the uterus. As this happens, do keep reminding yourself that this is completely normal and it will pass. So try to surrender to it. Symptoms include:

- mood swings
- anxiety
- sadness
- irritability
- feeling overwhelmed
- crying
- reduced concentration
- appetite problems

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Postnatal or Postpartum Depression

10-15% of women suffer from postnatal depression (PND), and the symptoms can vary, with no one symptom in the following list indicating PND. But a new mother who experiences, or exhibits many, or only a few of the following symptoms, may have PND.

- sleep disturbance
- anxiety – worrying a lot, having a sense of panic
- low mood, tearful or feeling sad
- loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities, including sex
- appetite changes
- negative and/or obsessive thoughts
- irritability, grumpiness, rage and/or sensitivity to noise
- memory problems and loss of concentration
- exhaustion, extreme tiredness, no motivation and fatigue
- inability to make decisions and feeling overwhelmed
- body aches, pains and headaches – eg feels like you have the flu
- excessive feelings of guilt, inadequacy, feelings of shame
- wanting to isolate and withdraw
- loss of confidence and self-esteem; fear of being alone
- scary thoughts of harming the baby, children and/or suicide and death

The difficulty in knowing whether you, or someone you know, has Postnatal Depression is complicated by the fact that some of these symptoms are common experiences of being a new mother, especially with lack of sleep. However, when these symptoms of depression begin to have an impact on the mother, her baby, possibly her other children and her partner, it is time to get help!

Things you can do to feel better

Recovery begins with asking for help, and making changes to create balance. Being in a place and space to simply enjoy mothering and to help with recovery from Postnatal Distress starts with you! There are things you can, and must do

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to begin:

- be kind to yourself
- get as much sleep as possible – put a sign at the front door when sleeping and limit your visitors. Birth is NOT a public event. New mothers need to rest and time to nest! Don't feel obliged to have guests.
- eat well - being thoughtful about nutrition is a positive form of self-care
- get exercise - moderate exercise can improve overall energy levels, relieve stress and muscle tension and help to improve muscle strength needed to carry and feed the baby
- develop a support network so that you feel less trapped and lonely. It is important to get out of the house
- accept help when it is offered! You are not superwoman and never will be.
- recognise any unrealistic expectations about what motherhood might be like
- ASK for help without feeling guilty or embarrassed. Looking after a new baby is hard work! You might need help with meals, housework and caring for the baby. An idea is to make a list of names and numbers of people who have offered help, or whom you feel able to ask before the baby is born.
- learn and become aware of your limits, triggers and warning signs of when you're becoming overwhelmed e.g. clenched jaw, raising voice, door slamming, irritability, indecisiveness
- have a bath with oils, candles and music
- have a massage - either from a professional, partner or friend
- attend postnatal yoga classes to help with toning, breathing and relaxation
- consider alternative medicines and care
- allow yourself time out to read a magazine or book, garden or simply relax
- watch a funny DVD or go to the baby friendly movie sessions – laughing is such a great way to release tension and change moods

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- get a babysitter to take time out as a couple. The importance of this should not be underestimated.
- have a girl's night out or in
- AND ...care less about the housework!

Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale

Postnatal Depression is one of the most common complications for Mums and Dads during pregnancy and the postnatal stage. The ten questions that follow, from the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) is a valuable and efficient way of identifying if you are at risk, or experiencing Postnatal Depression.

This form is usually used with a health professional, and without you knowing the scores. So, to give yourself the best chance of truly knowing how you are feeling, I do strongly advise that you don't look at the score section of this booklet until you have answered all the questions.

When filling out this form, you may choose to have someone present with you, or do this quietly on your own. If you have someone with you, please do make sure that the answers provided are yours. Also, on completion of the questions that follow, should your score be of concern within the rating given, please do reach out for help through your postnatal depression group, local health provider, midwife, doctor and supportive friends.

Please check the answer that comes closest to how you have felt IN THE PAST SEVEN DAYS, not just how you feel today. For example:

I have felt happy

- ☐ Yes, all the time
- ☒ Yes, most of the time
- ☐ No, not very often
- ☐ No, not at all

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This would mean: I have felt happy most of the time during the past week.
Please complete the other questions in the same way.

In the past seven days:

1. I have been able to laugh and see the funny side of things

- ☐ as much as I always could
- ☐ not quite so much now
- ☐ definitely not so much now
- ☐ not at all

2. I have looked forward with enjoyment to things

- ☐ as much as I ever did
- ☐ rather less than I used to
- ☐ definitely less than I used to
- ☐ hardly at all

3. I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong *

- ☐ yes most of the time
- ☐ yes, some of the time
- ☐ not very often
- ☐ no, never

4. I have been anxious or worried for no good reason

- ☐ no, not at all
- ☐ hardly ever

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☐ yes, sometimes

☐ yes, very often

5. I have felt scared or panicky for no very good reason *

☐ yes, quite a lot

☐ yes, sometimes

☐ no, not much

☐ no, not at all

6. Things have been getting on top of me *

☐ yes, most of the time I haven't been able cope at all

☐ yes, sometimes I haven't been coping as well as usual

☐ no, most of the time I have coped quite well

☐ no, I have been coping as well as ever

7. I have been so unhappy that I have had difficulty sleeping *

☐ yes, most of the time

☐ yes, sometimes

☐ not very often

☐ no, not at all

8. I have felt sad or miserable *

☐ yes, most of the time

☐ yes, quite often

☐ not very often

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☐ no, not at all

9. I have been so unhappy that I have been crying *

☐ yes, most of the time

☐ yes, quite often

☐ only occasionally

☐ no, never

10 The thought of harming myself has occurred to me *

☐ yes, quite often

☐ sometimes

☐ hardly ever

☐ never

Administered/Reviewed

By _____

Date ____/____/____

The scoring for this is at the back of this booklet.

Source: Cox, J.L., Holden, J.M., and Sagovsky, R. 1987. Detection of postnatal depression: Development of the 10-item Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale. British Journal of Psychiatry 150:782-786 .

Source: K. L. Wisner, B. L. Parry, C. M. Piontek, Postpartum Depression N Engl J Med vol. 347, No 3, July 18, 2002, 194-199

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Postnatal or Postpartum Anxiety

Most, if not all new parents experience some worry. But the symptoms of Postnatal Anxiety include:

- constant or near-constant worry that can't be eased dread about things you fear will happen
- feelings of dread about things you fear will happen
- sleep disruption - having trouble sleeping at times when your baby's sleeping peacefully
- racing thoughts
- fatigue
- heart palpitations
- hyperventilation
- sweating
- nausea or vomiting
- shakiness or trembling

Postnatal or Postpartum Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Mums with Postnatal OCD know that their thoughts are bizarre and are very unlikely to ever act on them. Postnatal OCD is temporary, and treatable with professional help.

- obsessions, also called intrusive thoughts, which are persistent, repetitive thoughts or mental images related to the baby. These thoughts are very upsetting and not something the woman has ever experienced before.

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- A soft-focus background image of a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light blue top, holding a baby wrapped in a yellow blanket. The woman is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression.
- compulsions, where the mum may do certain things over and over again to reduce her fears and obsessions. This may include things like needing to clean constantly, check things many times, count or reorder things.
 - a sense of horror about the obsessions
 - fear of being left alone with the infant
 - hypervigilance in protecting the infant

Postnatal or Postpartum Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Postnatal PTSD is temporary and treatable with professional help, and have the symptoms of this list.

- intrusive re-experiencing of a past traumatic event (which in this case may have been the childbirth itself)
- flashbacks or nightmares
- avoidance of stimuli associated with the event, including thoughts, feelings, people, places and details of the event
- persistent increased arousal
- irritability
- difficulty sleeping
- hypervigilance, exaggerated startle response
- anxiety and panic attacks
- feeling a sense of unreality and detachment

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Postnatal or Postpartum Psychosis

Postnatal Psychosis is a rare condition. One women in a thousand births suffers from Postnatal Psychosis. In most cases it begins within the first two to four weeks following the birth of a baby, but can occur later than this. Mood disturbances, and being out of touch with reality (psychosis) are the key signs of Postnatal Psychosis, and a women can experience some, or all of the symptoms within the first twelve months of giving birth:^{1, 2}

- your energy is on overload. You feel phenomenal and that nothing can stop you in a way that you've never experienced before. Conversely, you may be tired, irritable, and simply want to distance yourself from the world
- decreased need to sleep
- increased amount and volume of talk, such that it is difficult to interrupt
- racing thoughts, and rapid changes of topic when speaking
- you keep hearing and/or seeing things that no one else does or that you know are not there
- you may become suspicious of family and friends – people that you trusted prior
- you feel like you are losing track of time. Or time seems either very sped up or extremely slowed down
- you may be having strange sensations, for example feeling like things are crawling on you
- conflict will arise between those around you, and it is more than likely that people will notice you are not yourself
- picking up the baby frequently and not seeming aware of the baby's needs
- rapid changes of intense feeling states, from laughter to tears to anger and back again
- increased activity, e.g.embarking on spring cleaning the house, making many plans for the future etc

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- increase in pleasurable activities with no regard for the consequences
- increase in sense of self-importance

Mixed mood symptoms may also occur. This is where there are features of both depression and mood changes at the same time. Often the woman seems high or irritable, and has increased speech and thought patterns, but her underlying mood and thinking is depressed.

If you or anyone around you is concerned with your health and suspects Postnatal Psychosis, and this is often up to the partner or the mother's parents to be aware of these symptoms, take them to the hospital emergency room immediately

1. Mental Health Foundation New Zealand
2. Postpartum Progress

Scoring For Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale

Questions 1, 2, & 4 (without an*) are scored 0, 1, 2 or 3 with top box scored as 0, and the bottom box as 3

Questions 3, 5-10 (marked with an *) are reverse scored, with the top box scored as a 3, bottom box scored as 0.

Maximum score: 30

Possible Depression: 10 or greater

Always look at item 10 (suicidal thoughts)

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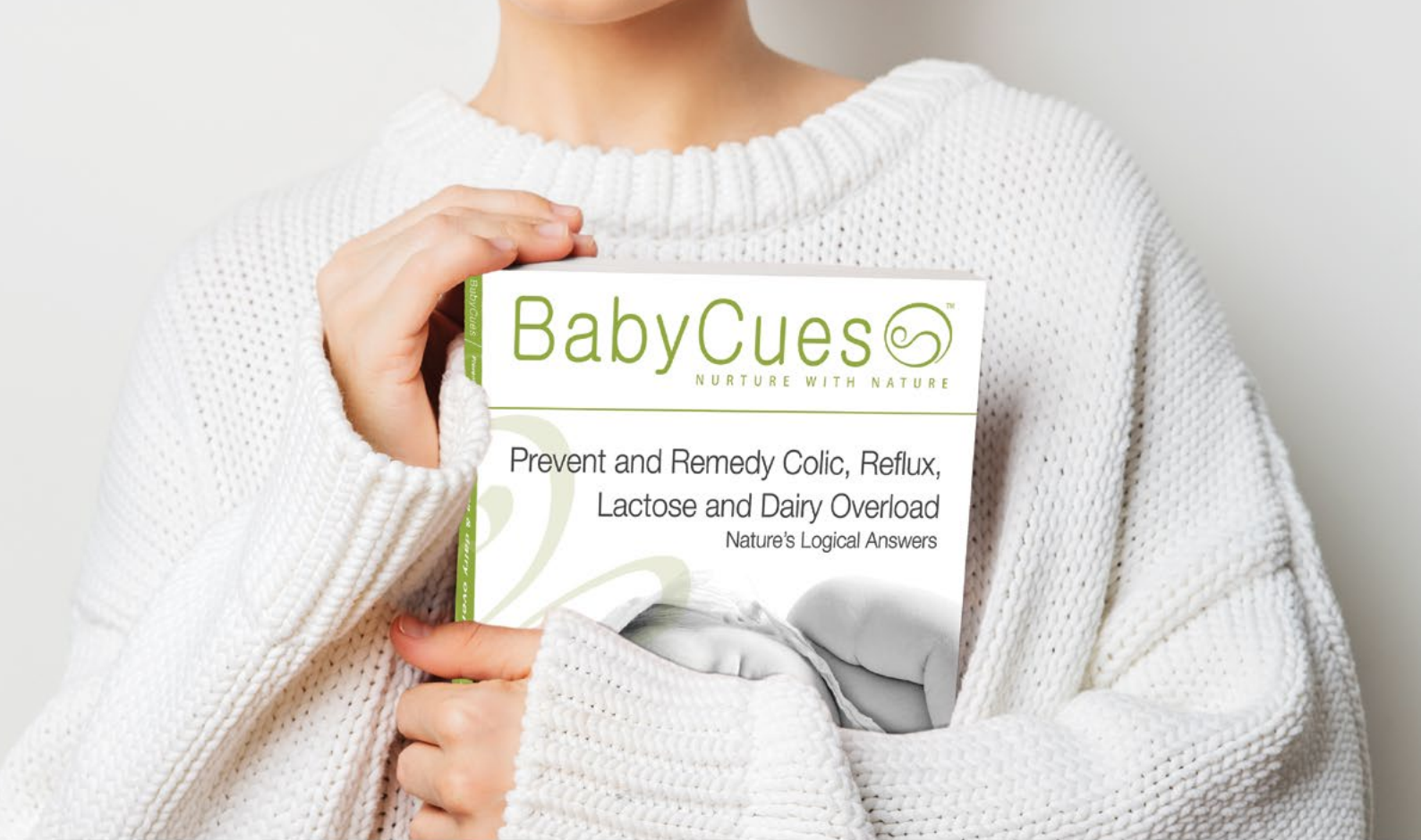
A woman with dark hair tied in a bun, wearing a blue hospital gown, is holding a baby wrapped in a yellow blanket. The baby is wearing a green cap. The woman is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression. The background is a blurred hospital room with large windows.

Please remember, if you feel that the person you have told about how you are feeling hasn't heard you, don't give up.

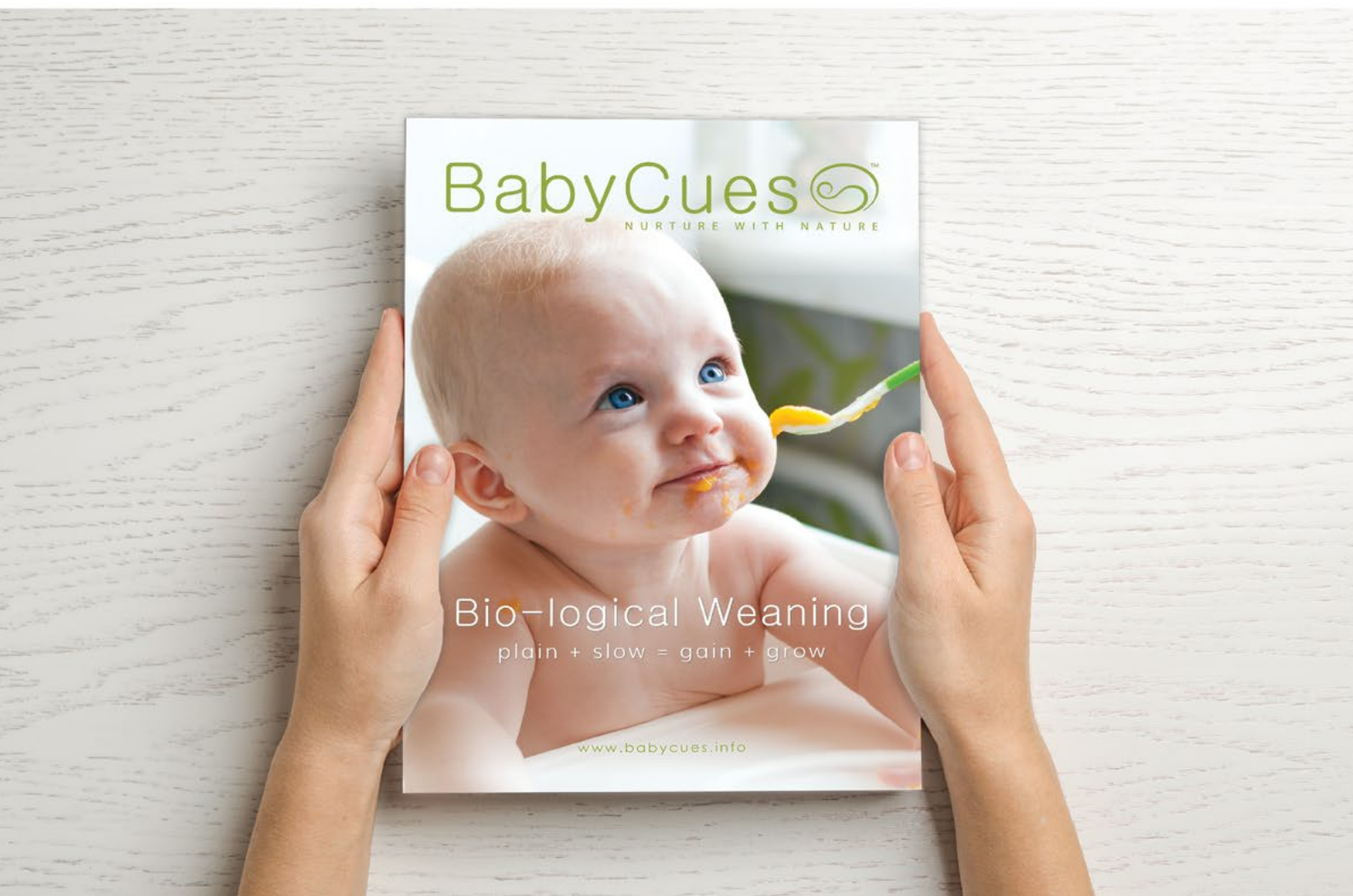
Try again until you are heard!

Keep on 'shouting' until someone understands you need help.

You will get better!



PERUSE NOW



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*self compassion is
paramount for your soul*



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Philippa x
