



ask **Dr Roshan Jain**

Your *mental and emotional health* questions answered

Q I recently delivered our first baby via caesarean section. This is time to rejoice, but I feel otherwise. I am moody, tearful and suffer from poor sleep. Often I fear causing harm to my baby, and therefore, care for him very cautiously. My gynaecologist feels I may be going through postnatal depression. Kindly advise.

You are quite right. This is time to be happy and to rejoice. More importantly, it is time for you to feel and keep well as you are required to care for yourself and your young one. New mothers usually experience mood changes (“baby blues”) two to four days after childbirth, and this is so common (seen in over 75 per cent of new mothers) that it’s regarded as normal. Its commonly reported symptoms or behaviours are: being very emotional - bursting into tears for no apparent reason or for reasons that may seem quite trivial to other people, difficulty in finding sleep or sleeping well (even when the baby lets you) and poor appetite. Some new mothers may also feel anxious, guilty, and afraid that they are not up to being a mother. Experts have analysed that baby blues may be due to changes in hormone levels or may be it is brought on by the experience of being in hospital. Baby blues resolve spontaneously, usually in a few days. It only requires supportive intervention. A mother with baby blues should be screened for depression.

If the depressed mood lasts longer or gets worse, it may be turning into Post-Natal Depression (PND). It is a depressive illness that affects between

10 and 15 per cent of mothers with just born babies. The symptoms are very similar to depressive illness at other times, and includes depressed mood with loss of interest, excessive tiredness, reduced sleep with early morning wakening - all presenting for at least two continuous weeks. It is important to recognise and treat PND, as it can have a negative effect on mother-child bonding and emotional development of the child. I suggest you see a psychiatrist as soon as possible for specialist advice and support. If necessary, go for prescribed medicines, taking care to check that they are safe to be taken by a breastfeeding mother.

Q I want to see a psychiatrist for stress related problems but I am not sure if the consultations are confidential and whether he/she will afterwards call my employer and disclose the details of my problems. Please advise.

You have come up with such a common but important question. All psychiatric consultations are strictly confidential. Your records will never be shared with anyone at anytime without your verbal or written directive. As clinicians, we follow medical council guidelines according to which patients have a right to expect that the information about them be held in confidence. This guidance sets out the principles of confidentiality and respect for patients’ privacy. Confidentiality is central to the trust between doctors and patients. Without assurances about confidentiality, patients or individuals

may be reluctant to seek medical attention or give doctors the information they need in order to provide good care. But appropriate information sharing is essential to the efficient provision of safe and effective care, both for the individual patient and for the wider community of patients. Confidentiality is an important duty, but it is not absolute. A clinician can disclose personal information of a patient if: (a) it is required by law, (b) the patient consents – either implicitly for the sake of his/her own care, (c) is justified in public interest. I see no reason why your clinician should communicate with anyone other than you without your explicit consent. A psychiatrist is a warm, caring, sensitive and attentive clinician, who treats all patients with respect, irrespective of the nature of their problems. I think it’s important you seek the needed support, and facilitate for yourself good health and the quality of life you deserve.

Our doctors will answer all queries on emotional and mental health. Got mind trouble of your own? Drop us a mail at bpositiveQA@apollolife.com
Or write to

B Positive magazine,
Lifetime Wellness Rx International Ltd,
5th Floor, Life Science Building,
Apollo Health City, Jubilee Hills,
Hyderabad-500033

Dr Roshan Jain,
Senior Consultant Psychiatrist &
De-addiction Specialist,
Apollo Hospitals, Bangalore.