Baby Blues

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First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes a baby in the baby carriage, goes the old rhyme. Having a baby can be a time of great joy and excitement for many new mothers. However few can actually anticipate the enormous amount of work that is involved in taking care of a newborn child until she actually starts to meet the daily challenges that motherhood has to offer. The initial period after childbirth is often filled with a multitude of mixed emotions. One moment a mother may feel excited and on top of the world while the next moment she might worry about the well being of her child or feel frustrated, inadequate and totally incapable to confront the new challenges. Being a mother of a newborn is a huge responsibility. It is a job for which we receive no prior training; we have to learn the skills instinctively, how to hold the fussy baby, cope with colic, change diapers and so on.

It is strange that while the past nine months you have done nothing but eagerly wait to hold the precious one in your arms, you suddenly start to feel anxious, nervous and sad when she finally arrives. If you are a new mother and are wondering what is wrong with you and feel unsure of yourself; perhaps it will give you a bit of consolation to know that these feelings are very common with mothers who have given birth recently and we call it the "Baby Blues". According to Dr. Syeda Husna Akhter, Senior Consultant, Department of Gynae and Obstetrics, Bangladesh Medical College and Hospital, "Mothers are usually tense, irritable, depressed and at times unmindful after delivery. These sorts of feelings may start from the first week after the delivery and are usually seen to decline by itself."

After giving birth, most women lapse into some sort of melancholy. Between 50 to 80 percent of mothers experience some form of the blues in the days after childbirth and it is said to be more common for the first time mothers. For most women the symptoms are mild and transient, characterised by a brief period of emotional instability that may manifest itself with episodes of unexplained crying and mood swings, lack of pleasure in almost all activities, decreased appetite, loss of energy, feeling withdrawn and socially isolated or unconnected, feeling of worthlessness, agitation and irritability, disturbed sleep patterns and at times negative feeling towards the baby. Researchers are not absolutely sure about what causes these blues but believe a variety of factors may be involved resulting in the blues. The physical changes during and after pregnancy contribute to the mood changes. The hormonal ups and downs take a toll on ones emotions. The extreme exhaustion caused by childbirth followed by the constant care for providing for the little one contributes to the baby blues. The new lifestyle, sleep deprivation, unrealistic role expectation, social isolation, psychological adjustments, overwhelming responsibility -- everything plays a part in the post partum blues.

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