Childbirth is so oversold as the woman's greatest achievement that women feel guilty and believe that something is wrong with them if they feel despondent at one point of time after childbirth. Many times it is not the problem of individuals but of the society that creates an unrealistic myth about motherhood. In our country many women suffer alone feeling miserable, unaware that postpartum mood disorders have a name. Husbands can play a major role to help wives through the motherhood blues. It is vital for men to be aware and sensitive to the feelings of their partners; they need to understand and be supportive and tolerant and help her handle the bouts of depression. Dr. Akhter further states: "Psychological support can work wonders for many women; husband and in-laws should be sympathetic and supportive. A change in environment can also help. The doctors need to play their part as well; they need to constantly assure the patient that these feelings are natural and that they will be feeling fine in no time."



There is a lot these women can do for themselves which will help them to easily come out of the blues. Mothers should remember to express their feelings to those around them and ask for support and advice from close friends and relatives; adequate rest with a balanced and healthy diet can come a long way; they can consult with their partner about the division of responsibilities; learn to prioritise, and not try to be a super mom. Mothers should be encouraged to take time out for themselves, read books, watch movies or just take a relaxing bath, exercise and most importantly try to take a lot of rest. A positive attitude towards life will certainly help boost the mood. The baby blues usually pop up out of the blue and disappear all on their own.

However for about 10-15 percent of new mothers, the period of baby blues may become quite severe and disabling, resulting in a full blown illness that recently has been recognised by the medial community and subsequently been termed PPD or postpartum depression. In such rare cases the depression may escalate to dangerous levels, where women go on to develop more severe symptoms leading to an inability to function and perform the activities of daily living.

Treatment of the blues is variable, depending on the type and severity of symptoms that a woman may experience. These symptoms, whether mild or severe are temporary and in most cases treatable with the support of skilled professionals. Psychotherapy can be an important tool in helping the woman to identify factors that may be contributing to her depression. Individual or family counselling, along with participation in a support group involving other women who have experienced this disorder may prove beneficial. Treatment with antidepressant and anti-anxiety medications is case-specific and based on a risk-benefit ratio. Factors such as the mother's symptoms, the decision whether or not to breast-feed and the side effects of the medication all play a role in deciding if and what medications should be used. Overall it is widely accepted that the treatment for baby blues or post partum depression can be widely improved by preventative efforts.

The emotions of having a baby range from joy to panic and despair. It is the birth of not only a child but of a mother as well. Like the newborn the new mother needs love, affection, food, warmth, sleep and support. Like each baby each mother is different, so help her be confident and most importantly let her be herself! ■