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Postpartum Depression Plan

Postpartum mood disorders affects 1 in 9 women, and through its not talked about enough, you need to know that you are in no way alone. When experiencing postpartum depression, it can be very challenging to reach out, or to help yourself, so having a plan in place prenatally is vital. Below are some tried and true tactics that I hope will be beneficial for you as you prepare for your best postpartum period yet!

Please read this over and then bring your partner into this conversation. Maybe it could even be turned into a date night?! Partners are the main support in the postpartum and need to be on board with the plan to support you. The end result will be a plan that has different levels depending on need.

1. Make a list of all the things that build you up and make you feel whole. This list can include things like date nights with your partner, watching a movie with your other children, going on a walk through your neighborhood, petting the cat, etc. When you're beginning to feel symptoms of postpartum depression, it is hard to think of anything you like to do, so this is a list you will turn to. Part of the plan will be for you to do something on this list 3-5 times a week to start and move it up to daily if necessary.
2. Prepare to stay in bed for the first week with your baby, and in your home sitting down for the second week. You will not be hosting, cleaning, cooking or doing any other job besides feeding your baby and using the restroom. All of your other needs should be taken care of for you. This time is setting the stage for your future relationship with your child. And it is an opportunity to recover and rebuild from your pregnancy and birth.
3. Plan to have your placenta encapsulated to stabilize your mood in the first two months. Plan to place your ready capsules, somewhere that you will see them so you will remember to take them daily. This is a service that I will be happy to provide for you.
4. After the first two weeks plan to go outside daily for a 30 minute walk. After six weeks begin an exercise routine or class. Time outside and exercise have been proven to improve mood! Take advantage of this.
5. Eat healthy foods! By nourishing your body, you will nourish your whole being and feel better. Think Paleo diet, that is, no refined sugars, lots of meat and fresh

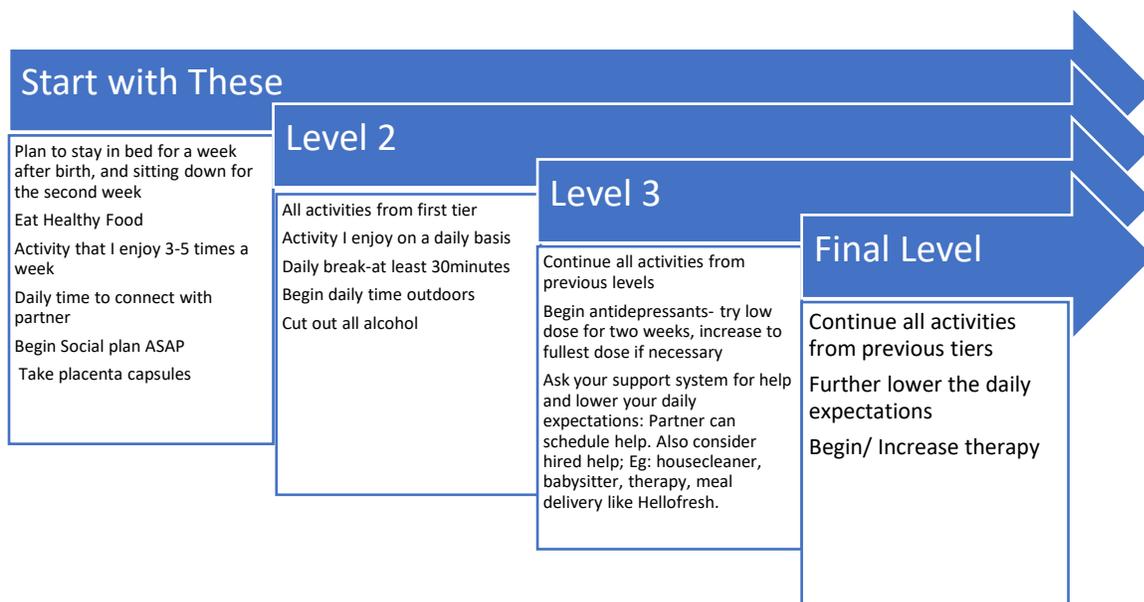
vegetables. Plan on drinking 2-4 quarts of water a day. There are 2 recent studies that link postpartum mood disorders to a weakened immune system, and healthy food will boost yours.

6. Find a way that you can get much needed social activity. This can be meeting with friends, joining a moms group or making yourself start conversations with parents at the park. Be careful and give your social energy to people that build you up. This is the time for you to be nurtured, whoever that is for you. If you think of people in particular, communicate with them prenatally. Ask them if they would like to come over or meet at a park on a weekly basis.

7. Plan a time in the day that you and your partner can spend 15 minutes communicating ‘your things’. This is your opportunity to tell them the good, bad and the ugly. Usually this is early in the morning or late at night when there are less children interruptions. It is a time to be vulnerable, be seen and heard and is SO important for your relationship. Invest!

8. Make a list of ways that you and your partner can assess how you are doing emotionally. Review symptoms of postpartum depression. Do you have any? This will be a way to know if you need to move up a level.

9. Finally together, make a planned approach to follow to combat PPD. It should start with the things you will do on a daily and weekly basis when you’re feeling really good. If you need more support then you move to the next level. The last two levels will include antidepressants and more clinical help. Your list will take preplanning to make it really easy to jump right in after you have your baby. Start working on all the logistics now. Put the written plan in a place that’s accessible and safe. You won’t want to lose it. An example is attached below.



Resources:

- Office of Womens Health. Gov
<https://www.womenshealth.gov/mentalhealth/mental-health-conditions/postpartum-depression>
- Postpartum Support International- includes resources for both parents and toll-free phone number to call <http://www.postpartum.net/>
- Podcast about local resources on WNKU <http://www.wvxu.org/post/tailored-treatment-mental-health-programpregnancy#stream/o>
- Postpartum Progress, includes a list of signs/symptoms of postpartum depression and postpartum anxiety <http://www.postpartumprogress.com/the-symptoms-of-postpartumdepression-anxiety-in-plain-mama-english>

Treatment Centers:

- Linder Center of Hope- in Mason Ohio 513.536.4673. When calling ask to speak to the intake department, at which point you will schedule an assessment.
- UC Women's Center in West Chester Ohio (513) 475-UC4U
womenscenter@uchealth.com Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Counseling:

There are many great therapists available. I can recommend the therapists at

- Wholehouse Counseling and Consultation
<https://www.wholehouseconsultation.com/>

Below is an example of a postpartum plan. This is very similar to the tiered approach I took during my last postpartum period with great success. I hope it is just as helpful to you.