

## TIP SHEET: Coping with Depression

*For the parent*

After giving birth to your baby, you may go through a phase where you feel sad and depressed. This phase is known as Postpartum Depression. While many women experience some mild mood changes during or after the birth of a child, 15-20% of women experience more significant symptoms of depression or anxiety. Postpartum depression is temporary and treatable with professional help. The most important part to remember is that it is not your fault that you feel like this, so do not feel guilty about your feelings. Also, don't forget that you are not alone. There are lots of people here in Riverside County who want to help you.

**Here are some tips to help you get through the Postpartum Depression:**

- Be aware of the symptoms: mood changes, irritability, sadness and anxiety. Then talk to your doctor about possible medications and other things she can recommend to help you.
- Don't be afraid to ask others for help when dealing with your child. The daycare in your church or your gym can be great places to start. Your anxiety won't be so overwhelming if you have help from others.
- Get someone to help you with childcare and housework. Eliminate or cut down on daily chores until you are feeling better.
- Build your support system because you need to express your feelings. Reach out to other mothers, family members and friends to share your frustrations along with your joyful moments.
- Physical activity can help you to burn off your frustrations and negativity.
- Eat well. If you have little appetite, fix small, nutritious snacks for yourself throughout the day. Avoid all caffeine and sugary foods and beverages;



these are associated with worsening symptoms. Increase your intake of foods made up of complex carbohydrates, such as whole-grain breads, cereals and pastas, potatoes and brown rice. Eat more fruits and vegetables. Try a turkey on whole-wheat sandwich.

- Get a hobby. Occupy your time with things you enjoy. Remember that you have a purpose aside from taking care of your child. Allow yourself to be the best mother you can be by growing in different areas and enjoying life.
- Surround yourself with positivity. If you lock yourself away in sadness, you allow yourself to live a sad life.
- Get at least 30 minutes of sunlight every day. Lack of sunlight can worsen depression.
- Enjoy having a child in your house! A child's moments are there to be cherished. Remember, there's beauty and greatness in being a mother.