

# FACT SHEET

## Dads & Depression

### KEY POINTS

- One in 10 fathers will experience postpartum depression or anxiety.<sup>2, 3, 4, 5, 7</sup>
- Depression and anxiety are two times as common in expecting and new fathers, compared with global estimates in men.<sup>5</sup>
- The peak incidence of postpartum depression in fathers is 3-6 months.<sup>5</sup>
- The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) has been validated for detecting paternal depression, but with lower cut-off scores.<sup>3</sup>
- Men suffering depression often exhibit higher levels of irritability and anger.<sup>6</sup>
- Fathers suffering postpartum depression report lower levels of affection and higher levels of criticism both toward and from their partner.<sup>6</sup>

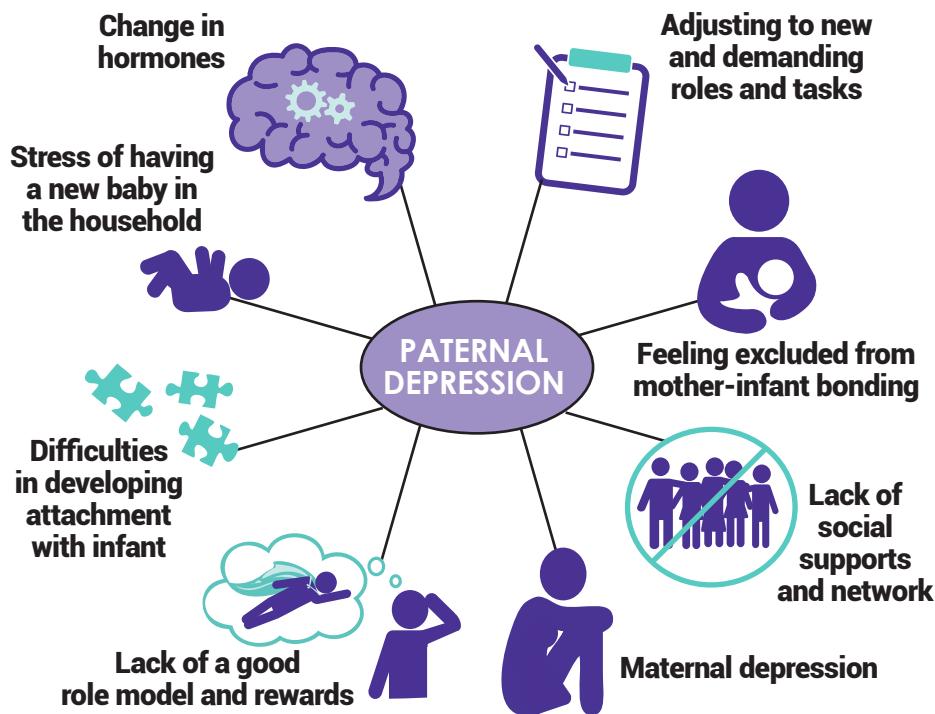


Learn more: [postpartum.net/news/ifmhd](http://postpartum.net/news/ifmhd)  
Follow: [facebook.com/dadsMHday](https://facebook.com/dadsMHday)

Society views men as stoic, self-sacrificing, and above all, strong. When men feel none of those things as new fathers, it might be hard to admit it or seek help. The stigma in experiencing difficulties as a new parent is even greater for men than for women.

### MATERNAL DEPRESSION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT RISK FACTOR FOR PATERNAL DEPRESSION<sup>4, 5, 7</sup>

#### CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS<sup>4, 5, 7</sup>



#### TREATMENT

To treat paternal depression, recommendations include:

Adequate sleep, exercise, nutrition

Social support

Talk therapy

Medication

#### IMPACTS OF PATERNAL DEPRESSION

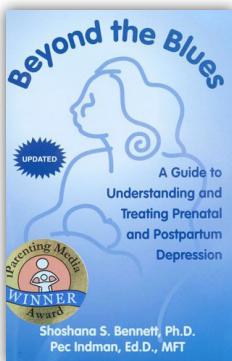
INCREASES	DECREASES
Negative parenting <sup>2</sup> , including harsh discipline practices (such as spanking or corporal punishment)	Positive parenting <sup>2</sup> , including sensitivity or warmth, and practices such as reading to children.
Hostility and conflict in the home, particularly with spouse/partner <sup>1, 6</sup>	
Children's behavioral and conduct problems <sup>4, 6</sup>	Higher levels of positive parenting by a non-depressed adult can lessen the impact of parental depression on the child. <sup>1</sup>

#### Citations

- 1 Chang et al. (2007). *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*, 161(7): 697-703.
- 2 Davis et al. (2011). *Pediatrics*, 127: 612-618.
- 3 Edmondson et al (2010). *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 125(1-3): 365-368.
- 4 Kim and Swain (2007). *Psychiatry*, February: 36-47.
- 5 Paulson and Bazemore (2010). *JAMA*, 303(19): 1961-1969.
- 6 Ramchandani et al. (2011) *Depression and Anxiety*, 28: 471-477.
- 7 Thiel et al. (2020). *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 11: 1-14.

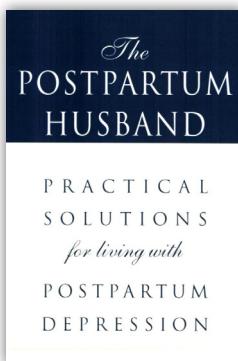
*This fact sheet was supported by a grant from the California Health Care Foundation*

# SUPPORT FOR DADS/PARTNERS



**Beyond The Blues** (by Shoshanna Bennett, PhD, and Pec Indman, EdD, MFT) devotes an entire chapter to supporting partners. Text of the chapter is available at:

[bit.ly/beyond-blues](http://bit.ly/beyond-blues)



**The Postpartum Husband** (by Karen Kleiman, MSW). This concise book provides insights for fathers / partners / spouses who are also experiencing depression or anxiety.

[bit.ly/postpartumhub](http://bit.ly/postpartumhub)



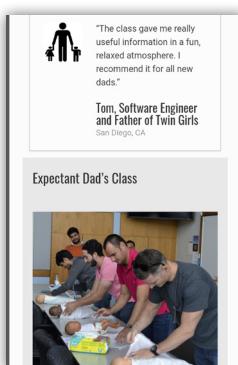
**Postpartum Support International** has a full page of resources for dads and partners, including:

- Dads Coordinator
- Weekly chats for dads
- Monthly support group for fathers

[bit.ly/dad-support](http://bit.ly/dad-support)



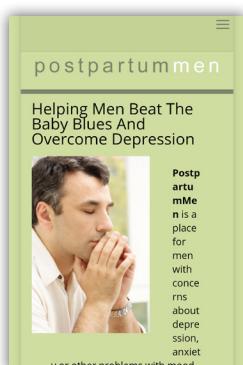
**Boot Camp for New Dads** is a father-to-father, community-based website that equips men to engage with their infants, support their mates and navigate their transformation into dads.



**Basic Training for New Dads** offers virtual classes where participants connect with other expectant dads and talk with a "veteran dad" who has been through the class.

[bootcampfornewdads.org](http://bootcampfornewdads.org)

[bit.ly/menexcel](http://bit.ly/menexcel)



**Postpartum Men** is a place for men with concerns about depression, anxiety or other problems with mood after the birth of a child. It includes a self-assessment for postpartum depression and an online forum for dads.

[postpartummen.com](http://postpartummen.com)

## AUSTRALIA'S PROGRAM FOR NEW DADS

SMS4dads is a program in Australia that provides new and soon-to-be-dads with useful messages and tips matched to their baby's age. SMS4dads sends three texts per week with tips and information about infant development to fathers' phones from 16 weeks into the pregnancy until the baby is 12 months old.

**How it works:** SMS4dads uses the 'voice' of the baby to deliver messages that are synchronised with the development of the fetus and baby. The messages—which focus on interacting with a new baby, supporting mothers, and staying healthy—are brief but have links to further online information.

**Success rate:** Over 90% of fathers report that the messages helped in their transition to becoming a father. Here's what fathers say about this program:

When other people tell me what to do, that doesn't really work for me, but when the message came from my baby asking me to read to her—well, what could I do?

The texts were a great conversation starter with my wife, I forwarded quite a few through to her.

The way the messages would pop up and sometimes the timing was just right to give you a boost or a smile amidst everything—like a mate tapping you on the shoulder.

Just wanted to say "thanks" for this project. The text messages have been invaluable and I couldn't have known just how important and how much I needed to receive these short and helpful messages.



# SMS4dads

Learn more at [sms4dads.com](http://sms4dads.com)