

*Etahi mamae hinengaro me maia ki te whakamahi*

## **Some Mental Health changes need urgent help.**

- Feeling overly excited, elated or 'high'; or very irritable and changeable in mood; or very confused in your thinking.
- Feeling unable to sleep (even when your baby is sleeping), or not needing to sleep.
- Having a lot of energy, racing thoughts and being overly talkative.
- Experiencing unusual ideas (which may include baby) that other people don't share.
- Seeing, hearing or feeling things that others can't.
- Thoughts of wanting to hurt yourself, your baby or someone else.

**These issues need urgent treatment and you or a support person should see your Doctor today, or contact the after-hours mental health team on 0800 775 222.**



Dads can experience the same symptoms too!  
Ka whai tenei momo ahua ia paapaa.  
The same coping tips can be helpful for them also.

*Ko koe, ko au, ko taua ka ora ai tatou* – it is you, it is me and others, together we can get through it.



[www.countiesmanukau.health.nz](http://www.countiesmanukau.health.nz)

Looking after you and your mental health	Version 01
CMH: Primary and Community Care	Last updated March 2019
Reorder number : Obstet A1076581	Next review date March 2021



*Tiakina ia koe, me too oranga hinengaro.*

Looking after you and your mental health.



*Tiakina ia koe*

## Looking After **You**

Having a baby can be full of challenges, no matter how prepared you are.

It affects all areas of your life; your relationships with family/whānau and partner, your sleep, your body, your finances and your work. It's not surprising that most women have times of feeling stressed, emotional and sensitive during this time. There's a lot to adjust to and you're mostly doing this on less sleep.

As well as thinking about the health of your baby, it's important that you focus on looking after yourself during this time! This includes your 'mental health': how you feel and think; your emotional and psychological wellbeing. Looking after your mental health is one of the best things you can do for the wellbeing of your baby.



*Mā te Iwi, hapu hoki hei whakarangatira te tamaiti.*

**"it takes a village to raise a child"**

*Noho ora*

## Staying well

A lot of women feel more anxious during pregnancy and with a new baby. It's not unusual to have some increase in worries and anxious thoughts. Many women feel 'flat' or down sometimes, and really tired, especially during the first few weeks. Most women have some unwanted anxious thoughts about their baby coming to harm or harming their baby, but few women talk about it. These thoughts and feelings often improve over time as you adjust.

*Anei he awhina mou, i tenei waa*

**Here are some things that can help during this time:**

- Talk to others: Share both the good days and the difficult times with people close to you. Chances are others will be able to relate to what you're feeling.
- Accept any help offered and share the load with chores and baby care: let others know what you need including laundry, a meal, cleaning, and baby cares.



- Rest or sleep when baby sleeps (the chores can wait!)
- Try to get outside for sunshine and a breather regularly e.g. a short walk.
- Be kind to yourself! Having a baby can be both wonderful and hard and every mother will have difficult days.
- Slow down and make time for just cuddling, looking at, and talking to baby.

*Kei te pookia te uauatanga i runga ia koe*

## When you're struggling...

For some women, pregnancy and after baby arrives can be a time where their mood or worries begin to make day to day life difficult. This is not uncommon. It can be the first time that mental health challenges have happened, or it can be a time that mental health difficulties re-surface or worsen.

There is a lot of support available to women who are struggling and getting help is really important for you and your family's wellbeing:

**Here are some changes to look out for:**

- Sleeping - are you often struggling to get to sleep between feeds?
- Worries or fears - are you having lots of thoughts or feelings that are distressing you?
- Feeling down, unhappy, guilty or angry most or many days?
- Losing enjoyment and motivation.
- Is how you're feeling making it hard to do daily tasks or to look after baby?
- Difficult feelings about your baby - e.g. anxiety, frustration, numbness?

*Me aha ahau*

## What can you do?

KORERO ki teetahi hei awhina ia koe - TALK to somebody who can help - let your midwife know your concerns and see your GP in the first instance.

Supports that may be helpful include increased support from friends, family, church or community: Counselling, medication or a referral to a service that provides social support may be offered. A referral to Maternal Mental Health Service may be appropriate.