

*For Immediate Release*

**One in five new moms suffer  
from postpartum mood disorder**

*Provincial Campaign Launched To Help Raise Awareness*

*Toronto, Ontario - February 20, 2007* – Postpartum mood disorders (PPMD) affect one in five new moms, yet most people don't talk about depression when they talk about the arrival a newborn baby. A new province-wide campaign is being launched to get people talking about postpartum mood disorders (PPMD) and to help increase awareness of the issue.

"Having a new baby can be overwhelming and it is not uncommon for new moms to feel sad, tearful, exhausted, or anxious after delivering a baby," says Dr. Ariel Dalfen, psychiatrist in the Perinatal Mental Health Program at Mount Sinai Hospital. "However, if these symptoms last for more than two weeks, then likely the new mother is experiencing postpartum mood disorder and she should seek help immediately."

Approximately 13 percent of new mothers experience postpartum depression after giving birth. Postpartum depression and postpartum mood disorders can be detrimental for the mother and child, if they are not recognized and treated promptly. In particular, it has been demonstrated that due to a mother's decrease in attentive behaviour towards her infant, the infant is more at risk for attachment disorders and more vulnerable to developmental delays.

Best Start, Ontario's maternal, newborn and early child development resource centre, is launching a province-wide campaign to help increase the awareness about postpartum mood disorders. Best Start is working with public health units and community health agencies across the province to provide resources to help educate people about postpartum mood disorders. The awareness campaign will also include posters, ads and a new website [www.lifewithnewbaby.ca](http://www.lifewithnewbaby.ca).

“Women need to understand that life with a new baby is not always what you expect, whether you’re a first-time mom or have had other children,” says Barb Willet, Manager, Best Start Resource Centre. “If women understand the symptoms of PPMD before they are in that postpartum fog, hopefully they will recognize the signs and reach out for help sooner.”

“Women who are suffering from PPMD need to know that they are not alone,” says Dr. Dalfen. “So many women suffer in silence and when they start talking about it, they realize that many of the women around them have also suffered from postpartum mood disorder to some degree. New moms who are feeling these symptoms should take care of themselves, take time for themselves, get counselling and consider medication. They have to put their well-being and the well-being of their babies at the forefront.”

Four out five new moms experience the “baby blues”. However, if they are experiencing hopelessness, restlessness, sadness, irritability or anxiety for more than two weeks, they may be suffering from postpartum mood disorders and should contact their health care provider; or call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or Mental Health Services Information Ontario at 1-866-531-2600.

For more information about postpartum mood disorders, visit [www.lifewithnewbaby.ca](http://www.lifewithnewbaby.ca) or talk to your health care provider.

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*For more information about the Postpartum Mood Disorder Awareness Campaign, please contact: Hiltrud Dawson, Health Promotion Consultant, Best Start Resource Centre at 416-408-2249 ext. 2250*