

It's All About YOU Mom....

May 2009

Parenting *Rules!*

Is It Just The "Baby-Blues"?



According to the Mental Health Association of America, over one-third of mothers caring for toddlers experience depression. Depression symptoms are common before and after giving birth and can sometimes last longer. For some women depression can happen at any time. Being faced with the challenges of caring for children, balancing work and household responsibilities, and financial difficulties can often worsen a mother's feelings of depression.

Depression is nothing to be ashamed of! There are many different causes of depression including: heredity, hormonal changes, biological factors and changes in life situation. Regardless of the cause, there are many ways to deal with and get through an episode of depression. It is okay to ask for help!

Call your doctor or your child's doctor if you are experiencing the following symptoms for longer than two weeks:

- Crying and overwhelming feelings of sadness
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Irritable and/or impatient
- Constant worrying and/or anxiety
- Feeling short tempered and/or agitated
- Trouble thinking clearly
- Lack of interest in your children and/or yourself
- Overreacting to unexpected problems
- Feeling overwhelmed by responsibilities

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It's "Mommy Time"....

Most mothers are so busy taking care of their family that they tend to neglect themselves and their own needs. Finding "Mommy Time" isn't always easy, but it should be a priority. Moms who are well-rested and relaxed are more able to nurture and manage their families without feeling overwhelmed and stressed out.

Don't feel guilty about taking time for yourself!

"Mommy Time" should be all about **MOM**, time alone to do whatever **YOU** want.

Here are some tips on getting the "Mommy Time" you need:

- **When the kids are napping, take time for yourself.** This doesn't mean catching up on housework or paying bills! Use the time to relax, read, and listen to music or nap; whatever makes you feel happy and relaxed.
- **Schedule your "Mommy Time".** Plan a date with yourself once a month. Have your partner, friend, relative or babysitter care for the kids while you get out of the house to spend time with a friend, take a walk or spend time doing a favorite activity.
- **Get up before the kids** to spend a few solitary moments before you start your day. This is a perfect time to do some reading, gentle exercise or to pamper yourself.

Spending time doing the things you enjoy helps you remember **who you are as a person**, not just as a mother. Moms who have an identity other than just Mommy, are more balanced, relaxed and confident.



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Moms Need Each Other...



A study conducted by The University of California, Los Angeles has shown that not only are friendships among women important they are also good for their health. Apparently hanging out with women friends releases the hormone *oxytocin* which lowers stress levels and prompts mothers to feel more nurturing toward their children.

When women become busy with work and family they often neglect these vital relationships. Making your family a priority is a responsible and loving act; however, Moms need to make themselves a priority too. Having and spending time with friends not only enriches your life but sets a good example for your children by teaching them the importance of relationships outside of the family unit.

If you have put your friendships on the back burner, make an effort to rekindle them. There are also many opportunities for you to make new friends; here are some suggestions:

- ✓ Join a parent support group
- ✓ Get involved with the Parent Organization at your child's school
- ✓ Join a Mom's Club
- ✓ Start or join a playgroup
- ✓ Volunteer for a charity organization
- ✓ Become a mentor or contact an organization that can provide you a mentor

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Stress Reduction and Relaxation...

It is inevitable; we will all feel stress at some point in our lives. Even Moms that are diligent about taking care of themselves and managing their time wisely will eventually feel the effects of stress.



So what is a Mom to do?

Learn what helps you relax!

While everyone is different in what makes them feel relaxed and stress-free; here are some suggestions to get you started:

- Get some **fresh air** and create some **space** between you and what is causing your stress.
- Take a **cat nap**, a little sleep can help reduce your tension level.
- **Meditate**; sit quietly and focus on breathing in and out deeply.
- Listen to your favorite **music**.
- **Exercise**. It is a great way to blow off some steam and release tension.
- Get together with a **friend**.
- Take up a **hobby**. It's time to just have some **fun!**
- Be sure to **get enough sleep** every night.
- Take care of your body by **eating right**.
- **Don't over-schedule** your time.

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Resources for Mothers...

Find a mentor or become one:

Families First Rhode Island

www.familiesfirstri.org 401-383-9933

Find out more about parent support groups:

Rhode Island Parent Information Network

175 Main Street Pawtucket, RI 02860
www.ripin.org 401-727-4144

Find a Mom's Club near you:

Mom's Clubs

www.momsclub.org 401-439-4351

Become a volunteer

Volunteer Center of Rhode Island

105 Gano Street Providence, RI 02906
www.vcri.org 401-421-6547

For answers to all your questions:

Rhode Island 211

www.211ri.org 2-1-1

ABOUT PARENTING RULES! E-NEWS...



Prevent Child Abuse

Rhode Island



Rhode Island

Family & Children's Trust Fund

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Please share this information with the families in your programs. Thank you!