



# Welcoming your little one!

**A SELF-HELP BOOKLET**



Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Perinatal Project

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Acacia Family support is a Christian Charity working across Birmingham. We support families from all faiths or none.

We provide, free of charge, and a wide range of support to help you recover from symptoms associated with Pre or Postnatal Depression.

The Perinatal Mental Health Project for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) is a 3 year funded project by the Big Lottery to raise awareness of PND within BAME communities.

Our services include befriending by our trained volunteers, group work sessions, telephone support and practical and emotional support.



# Postnatal Depression (PND)

Postnatal depression is a type of common depression effecting 1 in 10 women (NHS). However there may be many more which are still unreported and require support.

Research has also suggested that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities are more likely to be effected by mental health issues compared to the general White British population. This may be because of various cultural and language barriers.

Acacia has recognised that there is a gap in support for BAME mothers and wishes to address this inequality.

Postnatal Depression – what is it, signs & symptoms



## Signs & Symptoms

So what are the signs and symptoms of PND?

The important difference between PND and general depression is that a baby is also dependent on you. A mother or partner may both begin to experience PND when their expectations of being a mum or dad are not met:

A mother with PND may:

- find it difficult to get into an effective routine of motherhood.
- often think that “I’m a terrible mother” or “I’m not good enough”.
- feel anxious, upset, tired and cry quite often.
- not be able to sleep or eat properly or in routine.
- (in some cases) have thoughts about harming herself or the baby.
- feel lonely, and that no one understands her position.

What you must remember is that PND is not permanent and can be treated. However, it is best to get support as early as possible to prevent it effecting yours and your child’s life later.

## What is Perinatal Mental Health & the Causes of Depression?

'Peri' meaning near the time of, 'natal' meaning the time of birth.

Perinatal mental health therefore can be explained as the mental wellbeing of mother from pregnancy to the first year after birth.

Acacia however understands that perinatal mental health issues can extend to about 2 years after birth.

## Some Causes of Depression

**Our genetic makeup:**

You may be at higher risk of developing PND if someone in your family such as a parent has experienced it.

**Our psychological and personality makeup:**

The way we grow up in our childhood through to adulthood has a role in how well we are able to cope with different life events.

**Life events and social factors:**

Bad things often happen in life, such as bereavement, relationship breakdowns, unemployment naturally will have an impact on how we are feeling. Loneliness and isolation can increase our vulnerability. Having many other responsibilities and expectations within a household can also have an impact on well-being.

**Physical illnesses:**

Long-term or life threatening problems can have an impact on how we feel and our state of mind.

**BAME**  
**(Black, Asian & Ethnic Minorities)**  
**Mothers**

# BAME mothers

**PND in BAME mothers is around 13% higher than others because of additional factors, and fewer than expected BAME mothers receive diagnosis or treatment. Additional factors to PND can include:**

- **Unaware of healthcare support a mother could receive**
- **Lack of support of where to go**
- **Family expectations and responsibilities**
- **Differences in child rearing practices**
- **Language barriers**
- **Unemployed**
- **Caring for others in the family (elderly, partner's parents)**
- **Traditions and cultural barriers**
- **Stigma attached to mental health**

**And there could be many more**

**It is important to understand that different cultures have different practices. However, it is equally important to ensure that BAME mothers receive proper support, and this can be done by breaking down some of the barriers.**

## Some Cultural Practices...

- **There may be rest periods during the postnatal phase (after birth) where the mother may be restricted to leave the family home.**
- **Certain foods may be allowed and dis allowed during the pre and postnatal period (for example Asian cultures encourage high fatty diets after birth).**
- **Mothers may be expected to return to maternal home for a period of time.**
- **Heavy bleeding may be considered healthy to release unclean blood after birth.**
- **The mother-in-law or female relative may take on the primary role of looking after the baby (South Asian culture).**
- **Breastfeeding practices may be different between cultures.**
- **It is important to remember that there may be many more cultural and religious differences when relating to the pre or postnatal period.**

# Fasting

There are many faiths which practice fasting including Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism – it is usually a form of drawing closer to God.



Over the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims all over the world fast from dawn until sunset, abstaining from food and drink during this period. Within the Hindu religion, fasting can be observed once a week on a specific day, once a month during full moon (Purnima), on the eleventh day of fortnight (Ekadashi), or during festivals such as Navratri, Shivratri, Karwa Chauth and many more. Fasting within the Hindu religion does not necessarily involve abstaining from food and drink. Similarly, Buddhists may still drink but will prohibit solid foods.

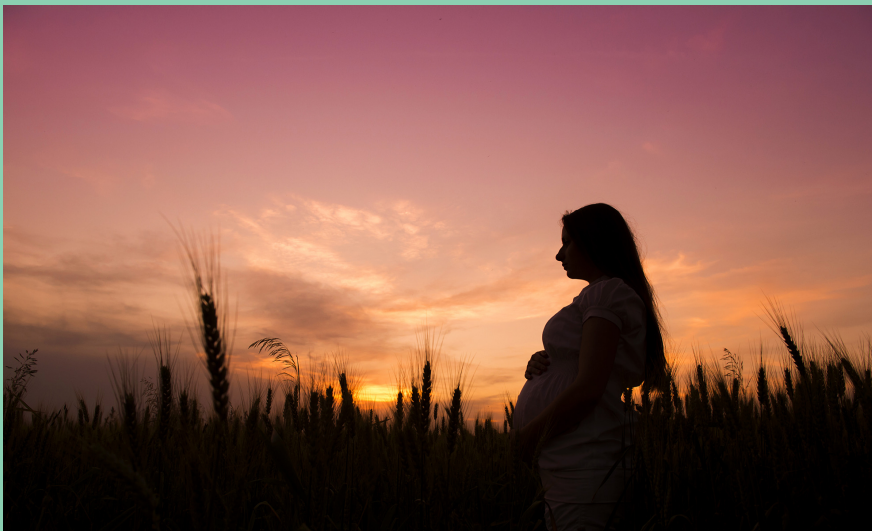
**It is important to remember that there can be sub-cultures within a culture who may practice other forms of fasting.**

# Fasting During Pregnancy

**If you have always fasted in the past, you may feel obliged or inclined to fast whilst you are pregnant. It is highly recommended to seek advice from a health professional if you wish to fast during your pregnancy.**

**Research has shown that fasting has been linked to lower birth weights. Medical evidence has shown that fasting is not a good idea if you are pregnant, but you may choose to do so if you feel strongly about it, particularly during the early phases of pregnancy.**

**The Islamic law states that a pregnant woman need not fast during Ramadan as she can make up for lost time at a later date or contributing towards charity to feed the poor. Likewise, with breastfeeding, a mother does not necessarily need to fast and can make up for this when she has stopped breastfeeding. Hindus you may also substitute fasting for periods of silence or meditation (Maunvrat).**



# Tips when fasting during pregnancy

## Effects of fasting during pregnancy:

- Dehydration
- Dizziness, feeling faint or light headed
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Body/ limb pains
- Feeling nauseous

## Tips:

1. Slow down if you are fasting. The less active you are, the less the body needs from you.
2. Stick to healthier options if you are fasting, such as more fruit and veg.
3. Avoid dehydration– Drink plenty of water if you are able to.
4. If you have abstained totally from food and drink your digestive system will have slowed down. Therefore, it may be worthwhile to break your fast with water or fruit juice or something light to eat.
5. During Sahoor and Iftar, it is recommended to eat foods which are slow in releasing energy such as whole grains, pasta's, lentils, beans, brown rice, plenty of fruit and veg.



# What can you do?

1. Talk about it. Talk to someone who you feel will understand your situation.
2. Speak to your GP or health visitor.
3. If you have trouble speaking in English, bring someone with you who you trust and request for a translator or interpreter for your next appointment.
4. Practice some self-help tips at home.

take baby steps...



# Self-Help Tips:

## 1

### Eat Regularly

1. Eat Regularly
2. Eat Healthily – balanced diet
3. Foods to avoid
4. Vitamin supplements
5. Relaxation exercise & mindfulness

When you are pregnant, it is very important to eat regular meals, usually every 3–4 hours. This is to ensure that your blood sugar levels are maintained and prevent them from going low. If your blood sugar levels go low, you might feel quite dizzy, tired or you may feel sick. You can keep a record of when to eat: Breakfast, mid-morning snack, lunch, mid-afternoon snack, dinner, evening snack. If your working shifts, then make sure you are eating a little every few hours.

See the recipes page for quick ideas!

# 2

## Eat Healthily – balanced diet

1. Eat Regularly
2. Eat Healthily –  
balanced diet
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exercise &  
mindfulness

Remember that you do not need to eat for 2, and you only need an extra 200 kcal a day for the last 3 months of your pregnancy until you give birth.

200 kcal = 1 medium banana & 1 diet yogurt, 1 medium jacket potato OR 2 thick sliced bread OR small portion of baked beans on 1 slice of toast OR a pint of skimmed milk.

You should try and eat at least 5 fruit or veg a day which can include fresh, canned or tinned fruit and veg. Make sure these are thoroughly washed before eating.

# contd...

To maintain a healthy weight, it is recommended to base your meals on starchy foods such as bread, rice, potatoes, pasta, chappatis but choosing wholegrain where possible as it is higher in fibre. This will give you and your baby energy help to stop you from feeling tired or sick. Fibre will also help prevent constipation and may reduce cholesterol in your blood.

Try to have 3 portions of milk and dairy a day. Milk and dairy are a good source of calcium which is vital for making your baby have strong bones and teeth. If you are unable to have dairy consider other sources of calcium include green vegetables such as watercress, kale, broccoli, spinach or tofu, soya drinks with added calcium, dahl, almonds, tahini, sardines.

You may eat 2 portions of meat, fish, eggs, beans (other non-dairy sources of protein). 1 portion = 2 eggs OR 3 tablespoons of pulses OR hand size of meat or fish. These will help your baby's muscles and is also a good source of iron to help your baby grow. Iron will also prevent you from becoming anemic and feeling tired.

# 3

## Foods to avoid

1. Eat Regularly

2. Eat Healthily-  
balanced diet

3. Foods to avoid

4. Vitamin  
supplements

5. Relaxation,  
exercise and  
mindfulness

When you are pregnant, it is important to be aware of what you are eating. Some things that aren't great for you such; cakes, biscuits, barfi's, chocolate, crisps, fried foods such as chips, pakoras, samosas can be difficult to avoid. However, you should eat these in moderation.

Try to avoid soft blue cheeses (danish blue, gorgonzola, roquefort) as they carry a lot of moisture and therefore more likely grow harmful bacteria. Other cheeses are fine to eat. In general, it is best to cook these cheeses thoroughly.

If pregnant, avoid raw or partially cooked eggs (such as homemade mayonnaise) and meat as this can increase the risk of salmonella (food poisoning) or infection which can be harmful to your baby.

**Try not to eat liver or products which contain liver such as pate, sausage or haggis as they may contain vitamin A. Vitamin A can cause harm to your baby.**

**Avoid soft whipped ice-cream from a dispensary machine due to the possibility of listeria (bacteria) growing on the nozzles.**

**Other things to think about: Caffeinated drinks can result in your baby having a low birth weight. Try having small amounts (only 1 mug of instant coffee a day), or try decaffeinated teas and coffees.**



**Drinking alcohol, especially during the first three months of your pregnancy can be harmful to your baby. There are many risks to drinking alcohol during pregnancy, as too much exposure to alcohol can cause many developmental delays to your baby. It can cause a premature birth, low birth weight and even miscarriages. It is best to avoid drinking alcohol during pregnancy.**



# Vitamin Supplements

1. Eat Regularly
2. Eat Healthily–  
balanced diet
3. Foods to avoid
4. Vitamin  
supplements
5. Relaxation,  
exercise &  
mindfulness

**Folic Acid** – This is a vitamin to help prevent your baby from developing any birth defects such as spina bifida (where the spine is unable to form properly).

**Vitamin D**– This vitamin helps your baby's bones and teeth to grow as well as keeping yours healthy. You can catch some natural Vitamin D by taking a walk in the sun. Vitamin D can help prevent rickets (soft bones)

**Vitamin C** – This vitamin can help absorb iron from foods and helps to maintain healthy tissues in your body. Many fruits such as oranges, kiwi, strawberries contain vitamin C.

# Relaxation, exercise & mindfulness

# 5



Exercising may be difficult when you're feeling low. There may also be some cultures which encourage a relaxation period or a rest period after giving birth. But, sometimes exercise can be equally as important when you're feeling low.

Quite often, the only exercise you might get is when your pushing the pram around, and that is OK. You can even do this in the garden. Do things at your own pace, and don't push yourself. Let it be a gradual form of exercise.

A 15-minute walk a day can help release feel-good hormones to help clear your mind.

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## 4 step Relaxation:

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position.
- Place 1 hand on your belly and 1 hand palm facing upwards on the side of your body.
- Take a deep breath in through your nose (for around 6–7 seconds)...keep lips closed.
- Breath out slowly through your lips, almost as if you are whistling, and feel your hand on your belly go down.

## Mindfulness

- Choose an object. This could be your wedding ring, a candle, your baby's sock, a necklace you got for your birthday ... something that might be important to you.
- Look at it, feel it, smell it, taste it (if it's food), listen to it (put it close to your ear). Engage all your senses on that 1 object and it may bring back memories.
- Block out other sounds.
- Repeat everyday if you want ... it only takes 5 minutes.
- Download the app Headspace for more information.

# Recipes ideas & variations

## Breakfast

### Toast with toppings:

2 slices of wholemeal/seeded toast  
with banana/avocado/  
topping of your choice

### Smoothie

3 kiwis

1 mango

500ml pineapple juice

1 banana Almond milk and berry porridge

80g blueberries

80g raspberries

40g porridge oats

300ml almond milk

### Scrambled omelette

2 eggs, 1tbsp cream, 1tsp olive oil  
try adding chopped tomatoes, onion and  
coriander Cereal with fruits

Shreddies max protein/ Weetabix/ bran flakes

with:

Low fat Greek yoghurt/ banana/  
strawberries/etc Fruit and granola and full  
fat or low fat yoghurt

You can buy supermarket own brand granola  
and add milk/ yogurt and fruits of your  
choice.

### Bruschetta

2 slices of wholegrain toast topped with  
cherry tomatoes, spinach/ kale and coriander  
leaves

## Lunch

Avocado pasta-

300g pasta

2 avocado

1tsp olive oil

Salt and pepper

Fresh basil

Courgette risotto

250g risotto rice

2 courgettes

110g peas

3 mint leaves

1 onion

25gbutter

### Healthy Wrap

Wholegrain tortilla wrap, spinach leaves, sweet  
corn, lemon juice, chick peas, grilled chicken or  
salmon is optional.

### Lentil soup

320g lentils, 1tsp olive oil, 1 onion, 2 garlic cloves,  
coriander, 1tsp turmeric, spinach leaves  
(served with toast wholemeal bread, chapattis,  
rice or tortilla wraps)

### Slow cooker roast dinner

Roast potatoes, baby carrots, baby corn, sweet  
potato, green beans, basil, black pepper, honey

## **Dinner**

### **Mushroom and kale/ spinach bake**

Sauté an onion and garlic clove in a tablespoon of olive or vegetable oil. Add mushrooms and kale/ spinach until they have wilted. Place in a baking tray and cover with cheese or pastry. Bake for 15 minutes. Add spices and salt to your desire.

### **Quick Veg curry (30 min)**

1 tablespoon of veg/ olive oil. Add rye and coriander seeds until they've popped. Add one chopped onion and 1 crushed garlic clove. Add 2-3 tablespoons of tomato puree and a quarter of a tin of chopped tomatoes. Add 2 tablespoons of curry powder. Add your choice and amount of vegetables or frozen veg. Add 1 tablespoon of salt, chilli powder and 340ml of water. Let this all cook for 15-20 minutes. Garnish with coriander leaves.

### **Noodle stir fry**

150g noodles (in a pack)

1 tbsp vegetable oil

2 cloves ginger, 1 carrot, 1 yellow pepper

1 tablespoon of soya sauce, 2 spring onions, Coriander

### **Pizza**

Slice a baguette in half, add tomato puree base and toppings of choice e.g. basil, sweetcorn, peppers etc. Bake for 15 minutes, or grill for 5-10 minutes.

### **Burrito bowl**

In a bowl add wholegrain rice, black beans, roasted veg and any additional toppings and spices.

You can have this with a tortilla wrap.

### **Quick pasta bake**

Fill a casserole dish with pasta and boiling water that fills the dish just above the pasta, along with pasta bake sauce, sweetcorn, chopped coriander, peppers. Also, add salt and pepper to taste. Chilli flakes and paprika are also an option

**Baked samosas – try baking instead of frying**

**Khichidi – add rice and lentils in water and bring to boil until cooked (add spices and potatoes)**

# Further support & useful contacts

## **PANDAS Foundation**

[www.pandasfoundation.org.uk](http://www.pandasfoundation.org.uk)

**Support to individuals affected by pre or postnatal depression and postnatal psychosis**

## **GOAL Go Women Alliance CIC**

[www.gwacic.com](http://www.gwacic.com)

0121 327 2997

**Supporting women with a wide range of services in different languages**

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic  
Perinatal Project

Acacia Family Support  
5a Coleshill Street  
Sutton Coldfield  
West Midlands  
B72 1SD

[www.acacia.org.uk](http://www.acacia.org.uk)  
[help@acacia.org.uk](mailto:help@acacia.org.uk)  
0121 301 5900



## **Acacia Family Support**

[www.acacia.org.uk](http://www.acacia.org.uk)

0121 301 5990

**Free support services to families in Birmingham affected by pre or postnatal depression, including fathers. Free resources available on our website.**

## **Royal College of Psychiatrists**

[www.rcpsych.ac.uk](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk)

**Downloadable resources in various languages**

## **MIND**

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

**National mental health charity providing a wide range of services**

## **New Hope Birmingham**

[www.nhbham.org](http://www.nhbham.org)

[info@nhbham.org](mailto:info@nhbham.org) / 0121 455 8144

**Provides skill based programs for disadvantaged, minority ethnic communities focusing on education, health, employment, sports, culture and heritage**



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