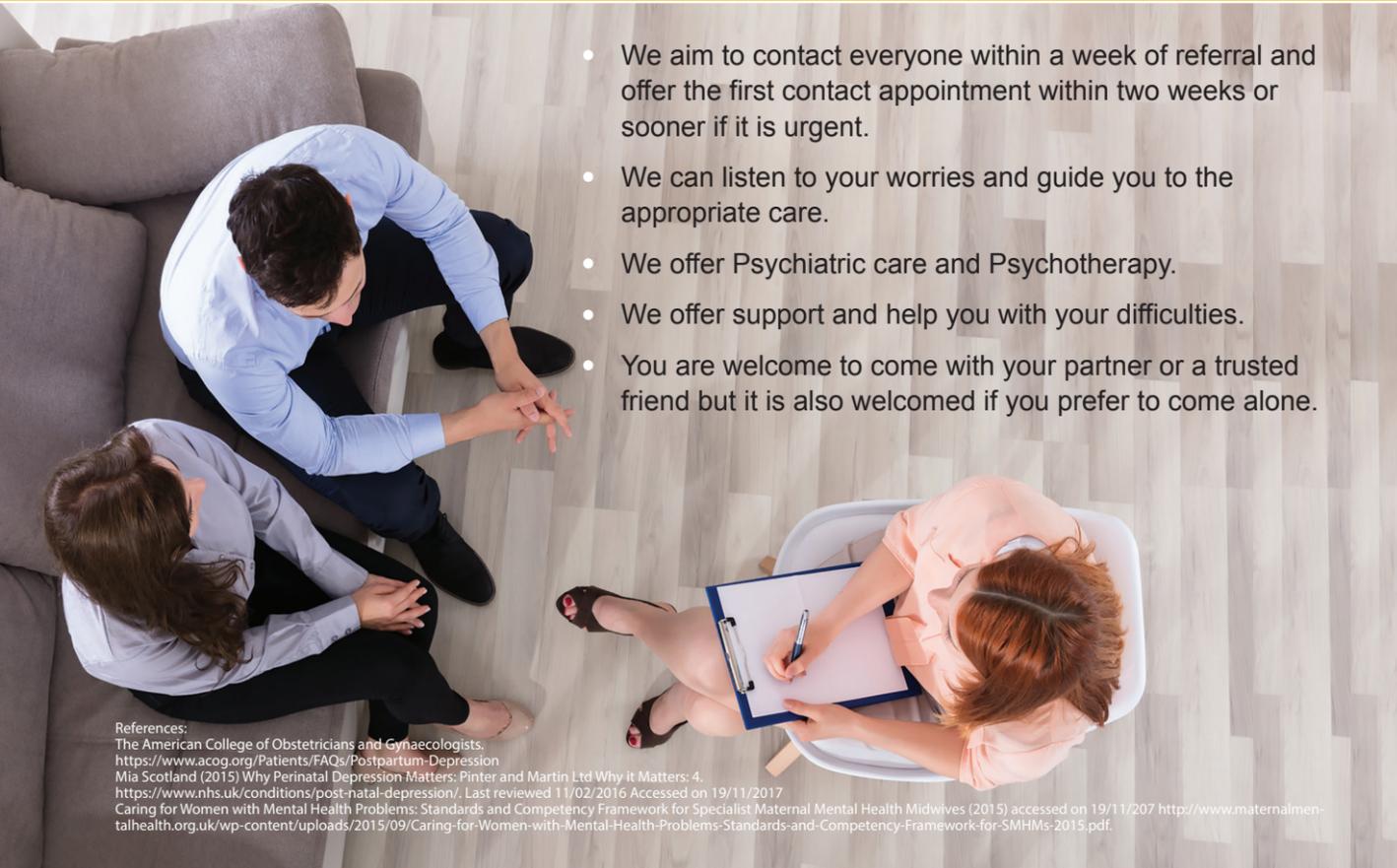




### At times women may require treatment

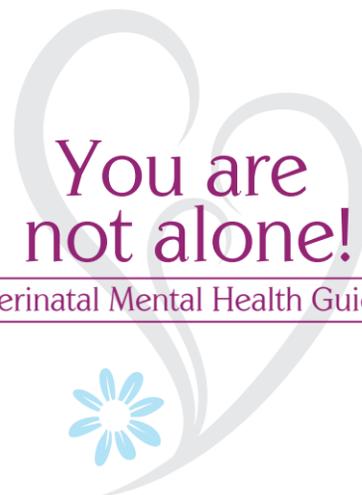
Most women will get better within 3 to 6 months postpartum without any treatment. 1 in 5 mothers with Postnatal Depression (PND) are still depressed no matter how hard they try. PND can spoil the experience of new motherhood, it can strain the relationship with the baby or your partner. You may not look after your baby, or yourself, as well as you would than if you are well. PND can affect your child's development and behaviour even after the depression has ended. So the shorter it lasts, the better.

### What the service offers:



- We aim to contact everyone within a week of referral and offer the first contact appointment within two weeks or sooner if it is urgent.
- We can listen to your worries and guide you to the appropriate care.
- We offer Psychiatric care and Psychotherapy.
- We offer support and help you with your difficulties.
- You are welcome to come with your partner or a trusted friend but it is also welcomed if you prefer to come alone.

References:  
 The American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. <https://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Postpartum-Depression>  
 Mia Scotland (2015) Why Perinatal Depression Matters: Pinter and Martin Ltd Why it Matters: 4.  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/post-natal-depression/>. Last reviewed 11/02/2016 Accessed on 19/11/2017  
 Caring for Women with Mental Health Problems: Standards and Competency Framework for Specialist Maternal Mental Health Midwives (2015) accessed on 19/11/2017 <http://www.maternalmentalhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Caring-for-Women-with-Mental-Health-Problems-Standards-and-Competency-Framework-for-SMHMs-2015.pdf>.



# You are not alone!

Perinatal Mental Health Guide

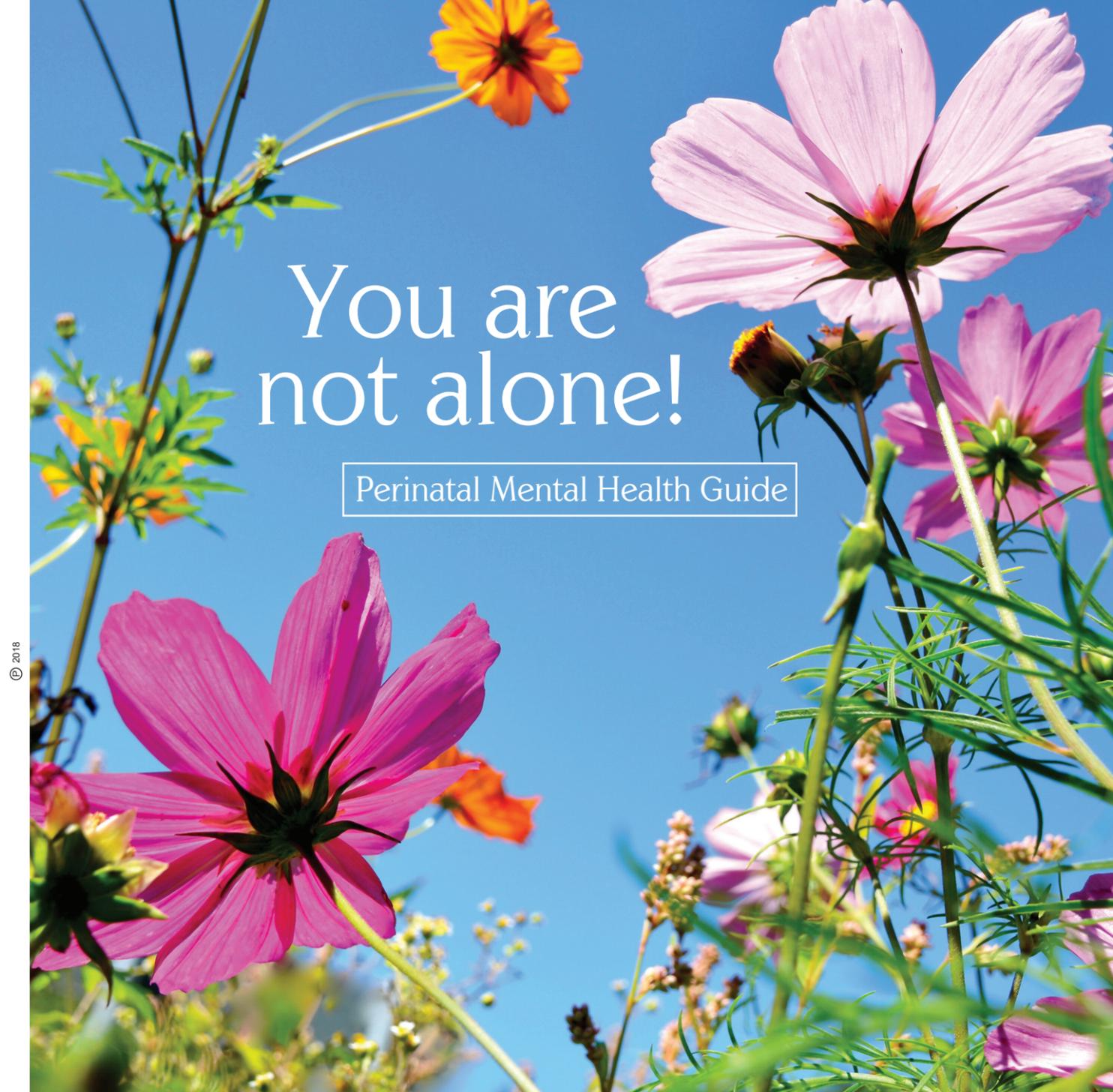
**Useful contact numbers**  
 Perinatal Mental Health Clinic Mater Dei Hospital:  
**2545 7410 or 7970 1767**  
*You may call or leave a message.*



## Perinatal Mental Health Clinic



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# You are not alone!

Perinatal Mental Health Guide



## You are not alone!

### Perinatal Mental Health Guide

The perinatal period refers to the time when a woman is pregnant and the first year following the birth of the baby. The personal journey a woman takes during pregnancy, childbirth and early motherhood is unique to her. This period can be the most challenging or rewarding experience in a woman's life and during this time it is common that women and their partners experience different emotions.

A lot of mixed emotions about your pregnancy and your baby may start during the antenatal period and continue throughout the perinatal stage. You may experience feelings of worry, tiredness and stress which are related to these new circumstances. This is a normal feeling and a period of adjustment is to be expected. While coping with the physical changes during pregnancy, birth and beyond, it is important to care for your mental health too.

**Mental Health problems are more common than physical health issues in pregnancy as they affect up to 20% of pregnant women.**

After birth, 50-80% of women encounter the **Postnatal Blues**. Some women may feel anxious, depressed and upset. This is quite common and if such emotions do not resolve within the first 2 weeks and you start feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope, it is advisable to seek help.

**Talk to the midwife or your obstetrician**



At times women experience intense feelings of sadness, anxiety or despair and these could be signs of Postpartum Depression. It can start anytime within the first year of postpartum and it usually lasts several weeks or months. If left untreated, it could last up to 2 years.

**Never make the assumption that symptoms are just caused because of pregnancy or birth.**

### Let's have a look at the common signs to watch for:

- Tearfulness.
- Feeling overwhelmed.
- Being irritable/arguing more often.
- Lack of concentration.
- Feeling anxious.
- Change in sleeping patterns/not sleeping well or sleeping too much.
- Change in appetite /not eating well or eating too much.
- Feelings of worthlessness or helplessness, and at times feeling of guilt.
- Lack of interest in doing usual things and not functioning in your usual manner.

### At times women may also:

- Have difficulty to bond with their baby.
- Think about death or suicide.
- Have intrusive thoughts.
- Introduce strict rituals and obsessions.



### Dad you matter too!

You have an important role for both your partner and your baby. On average, new fathers experiencing postnatal depression ranges from 1 in 10 to 1 in 4. This is as high as some of the estimates for new mothers. If you are struggling emotionally it is important that you seek help! You are not alone, you are not weak and you are not in fault. This information applies to you too; you need to take care of yourself so that you can take care of your partner and be strong for your baby.



### Seeking for help is an important step!

#### Ways to cope:

- It is a difficult time to be alone.
- Talk to someone you trust about your feelings, such as your partner, a friend, sibling or parent.
- Discuss emotions with your midwife or your obstetrician.
- Ask for support if you are worried about yourself and your baby's wellbeing.
- Do not be too hard on yourself, you are not expected to be a superwoman or a super dad.
- Ask for help with house chores and baby sitting.
- Have a healthy diet and keep active.
- Treat yourself and try to organise time for you and your partner.

#### Remember:

- It is common to feel emotionally unwell, it is nothing to be ashamed of.
- The best first step is to get the right support and talk things out with a trusted person.
- No one is immune! Anyone can experience mental illness.
- Past history of such conditions does not mean it will happen again.
- Being informed can make a big difference so that both of you can enjoy your perinatal journey.

#### What can partners, family and friends do to help:

- Be aware that most mothers and fathers go through emotional difficulties so be ready to listen and offer support.
- Do not judge.
- Give time to new mothers and fathers to adjust to their new challenges.
- Assist with practical help like house chores and babysitting.
- Encourage mothers to seek for help if any worrying mood changes are noted.