

12 May 2019

## Dear Dr Google... Am I a bad mother?

**Each year thousands of parents experience depression and anxiety related to the birth of their baby, but many don't realise they may have a mental health condition.**

A new Beyond Blue analysis has found many parents are reluctant to have an open conversation about their feelings and instead seek answers online to questions they're too afraid to ask aloud.

Both women and men can experience perinatal depression and anxiety, with risks increasing during pregnancy and the 12 months following birth.

Each year one in ten women will experience depression *during* pregnancy, one in six women will experience postnatal depression and anxiety – and one in ten fathers will experience postnatal depression.

Beyond Blue analysed current global Google data for terms that may indicate signs of anxiety and depression during the perinatal period.

- “I don't love my baby” was searched 3,840 times last year
- “Am I a bad mother?” was searched 3,800 times last year
- “I hate being pregnant” was searched 15,600 times last year
- “Does my baby love me?” was searched 4,680 times last year
- “I feel alone in my pregnancy” was searched 2,040 times last year

Beyond Blue Clinical Adviser Dr Grant Blashki said many new parents may not recognise that they are experiencing perinatal anxiety or depression, or that there is help available.

“Many parents navigate the journey alone, believing symptoms are just part of being a new parent, but it's important to recognise when feelings affect day-to-day life,” Dr Blashki said.

“Modern mums and dads are also up against a type of stressor related to social media: the pressure to be the perfect parent, which often paints a false and highly selective representation of what parents *should* experience day-to-day.

“Seeking and accepting help is critical for parents, however the first step in doing so is recognising the signs of depression and anxiety.

“We're encouraging new mums to complete the Mum's Mental Health Checklist – a set of 10 questions designed to give new and expectant mothers, and their health professionals, an insight into how they're coping.

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“The checklist is a simple first step towards getting the appropriate support for their needs.”

Beyond Blue today launches its new Perinatal Depression and Anxiety (PNDA) campaign, *Strength in Numbers*.

The new campaign works to identify, educate and support mums and dads who experience anxiety and depression during this period – while emphasising that they are not alone and that help is available.

To find out more, visit [healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au](https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au) or access the [Mental Health Checklist for Mums](#).

**Check out our campaign here:**

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/8kl9yceluae965i/AADOdBIARXm1\\_EifdpY6Wi2ca?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/8kl9yceluae965i/AADOdBIARXm1_EifdpY6Wi2ca?dl=0)

**Notes to editors:**

The *Mental Health Checklist for Mums* is the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS). The checklist includes 10 short questions, to identify whether parents fall into the low, medium or high range, followed by information on next steps and support lines.

**To read more, or to visit the checklist, visit:**

<https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au/pregnancy-and-new-parents/maternal-mental-health-and-wellbeing/mental-health-checklist-for-mums>

To learn more about Beyond Blue, visit [beyondblue.org.au](https://beyondblue.org.au) or head to social media to follow on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

*Mental health professionals are available at the Beyond Blue Support Service via phone 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 or via [www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support) for online chat (3PM – 12AM AEST) or email responses (within 24 hours).*

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