

HEALTH CARE

Life with a new baby is not always what you expect

As many as one in five new mothers will experience some type of postpartum (following birth) mood disorder. These mothers may feel hopeless, frustrated, tearful, guilty, anxious, exhausted, too wound up to sleep, or may feel extremely high and full of energy.

A very small number of new mothers (about one or two in a 1,000) will suffer from postpartum psychosis. They will have trouble distinguishing between what is real and what is not and may have repeated thoughts of harming themselves or their babies.

Partners, family, and friends of the anxious or depressed woman are often unsure how to help. In many cases, the new mother's mood or lack of interest in the baby just doesn't match up with her excitement during the pregnancy or the careful preparations she made for the baby's delivery and homecoming.

The good news is that families and friends can do much to help their loved one:

- They can listen, support her feelings, and ask how specifically they can help.
- They can encourage her to seek professional help from her doctor, midwife, or public health nurse.
- They can support her by caring for the baby or doing housework. Any good support person also knows the value of being patient with, and encouraging, the person who is recovering.
- Lastly, families and friends can educate themselves about postpartum mood disorders.

A woman's recovery from a postpartum mood disorder may involve several strategies. She can begin by asking for help— something that may be difficult to do if she thinks she should have all the answers or is ashamed of her feelings. She needs to be encouraged to care for herself by resting

sufficiently, eating healthy foods and being active. She should accept offers of help with household chores and baby care so that she can have a break. Counselling and medication are helpful for many mothers. She may need reassurance from her health care provider that the medication recommended is safe to take while she is breastfeeding.

During the month of March you may see newspaper articles, television ads, and

public awareness and reassure mothers afflicted by these disorders that they are not alone, they are not at fault, and help is available. In fact, early treatment and support increases the rate and speed of recovery.

Halton Region's Health Department is here to help. New mothers in hospital can request a follow-up telephone call from the public health nurse once they get home. As well, every family can have an in-home visit from a public health nurse who will answer their questions, check to see how the baby is feeding and growing, and provide helpful information about community programs, safety, and mother's and baby health.

Public health nurses are available by telephone, five days a week between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to respond to new parents' questions and concerns. In addition, extra support is available through the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program for parents-to-be and families with children up to the age of three years.

For more information about postpartum mood disorder or caring for your baby, contact Halton Region at 905-825-6000, toll free 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-442-5866), TTY 905-

827-9833, or visit our website at www.halton.ca

Health Notes is prepared by staff of Halton Region's Health Department.



buses and in malls as part of a provincial media campaign focusing on postpartum mood disorders. The goal is to raise

Cancer groups seek volunteers

The Acton branch of the Canadian Cancer Society is looking for canvassers in the following areas: Kingham Hill, Honeyfield, Acto-Valley, Danville and area behind Sobeyes.

A few hours of your time is all we need. For more information call Cathy, 519-853-1424.

The Cancer Assistance Services of Halton Hills offers practical assistance for cancer patients and their families. As one of its numerous services, volunteer drivers provide caring, confidential transportation to and from hospital treatments and medical appointments.

This service is much needed and appreciated but it is costly. CAS-hh is in need of volunteers in several areas, including its annual fund-raising campaign. Volunteers are needed to canvass for about six hours during the month of April. To volunteer call the office at 905-702-8886.

Bank donates to United Way

Halton Hills United Way volunteers Don Fitzsimons (left) and Cor Baarda recently accepted a \$2,000 cheque from Scotiabank Acton branch manager Angela Horobin, which was raised by staff events like a used book sale, silent auction of items donated by local businesses and a barbecue at Sobeyes. The staff also pays to take part in dress-down Fridays.

Photo by Ted Brown



Exercise Your Mind

Read The Newspaper

Studies show that reading keeps your mind sharp. Give your brain a boost.

Read the Independent & Free Press and open your eyes and your mind to a world of information.

THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

Baynes Physiotherapy Georgetown

Telephone: **905-873-4964**

232A Guelph St., Unit 10
(next to Ares Restaurant)

Same caring quality treatment since 1988

Family and Cosmetic Dentistry

Dr. Anoop Sayal & Associates

877-CARE (2273)

Georgetown Market Place Mall
www.georgetowndental.com

The best fittings begin with *Naturalwear*.

Come in today to see the new silky-soft Harmony SILK breast forms. SILK forms are available in a variety of sizes and shapes, each offering unparalleled softness and comfort. Let our professional fitters take care of your post-mastectomy needs. Come in today and see the NEW! SILK forms, only from Naturalwear by Trulife.

www.diannesmastectomy.com

Dianne's Mastectomy 905-454-5710

PROSTHESES • BRAS

The Safe Choice For Post Breast Surgery Women