

Healthy You

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 **Lehigh Valley
Health Network**

3 Tips for New Moms

Manage the challenges of parenthood

You're home from the hospital with your new baby.

Everyone tells you to cherish this time. So why do you feel overwhelmed and unsure?

"Everyone naturally thinks becoming a parent is going to be joyous immediately," says obstetrician/gynecologist Timothy Pellini, MD, with Lehigh Valley Health Network. "New parents don't always expect the amount of work, frustration and changes that occur."

Here are 3 tips to help new parents manage after baby comes home:

1 Seek out family and friends— "All parents need a support network to help them navigate those first few weeks," Pellini says. Accept help when it's offered, whether it's for cooked meals, laundry, housecleaning or watching the baby so you can sleep.

2 Expect some challenges—Feeding and caring for your newborn doesn't always come easily, but there is help. Attend classes to prepare you and your partner so you know what to expect. At Lehigh Valley Health Network, certified lactation consultants are available in the hospital after delivery for support. If you're still having trouble at home, your pediatrician can connect you with a lactation consultant. Or join a breastfeeding support group (see photo caption).

3 Watch for 'baby blues'— Childbirth can trigger intense emotions, from excitement and joy to sadness and anxiety. These major mood shifts can last up to two weeks. When these feelings last longer or intensify, you may have postpartum depression.

"Talk with your doctor if your symptoms are impacting your quality of life and your ability to enjoy what should be a wonderful time," Pellini says. Prompt treatment, which may include medication, counseling or both, can help you manage your symptoms and enjoy your new baby. "A postpartum depression support group also can help you navigate the various emotions you may experience after delivery," Pellini says.

Next Step: *Preparing for baby? See our "raising a family" classes on page 19, visit lvhn.org/healthyyou or call 610-402-CARE.*



Embracing new motherhood—After the birth of her first child, Svetlana Daniels of Allentown received helpful and comforting support. The 27-year-old new mom and her husband took several parent education classes at Lehigh Valley Health Network to prepare for Taya's arrival last September. "It was phenomenal," Daniels says. After a smooth delivery, Daniels attended Monday Morning Moms, a health network group that brings new moms together with certified lactation consultants to discuss breastfeeding concerns and triumphs. She left encouraged. "I learned a lot of good tips," she says. "They made me feel normal."