



Australasian

birthtrauma

Association

GETTING HELP

Find more resources, support and guidance visit
birthtrauma.org.au

Information shared is designed to support, not replace, the relationship that exists between you and your health professional/s.
To find more resources, support and guidance visit our website.

GETTING THE HELP YOU NEED

At ABTA we recognise that you have found us because something isn't right.

If you feel you are experiencing some of the symptoms we've detailed, we want you to know first and foremost that you are not alone. Below are some suggestions for recovery after a traumatic birth.

WHERE TO START?

A good starting point is to speak with someone you trust, rather than waiting for the feelings or physical symptoms to go away on their own. This could be:

- Your partner, family or friends
- Your mothers' group
- A Community or Religious leader
- Speaking to or emailing one of our volunteer peer mentors, or
- Joining our Facebook support group.

For more information visit us online or on social media

 facebook.com/birthtrauma.org.au

Some family and friends may tell you it will get better, or that these feelings are normal after birth, but if your symptoms persist it may feel more appropriate for you to contact a health professional for support.

There is a wide choice of useful treatments subsidised by Medicare, Care Plans set up by your GP, ACC (NZ), Private Health cover and other online sources. We suggest starting with your GP (but book a longer consultation time), your obstetrician or midwife, or early childhood nurse.

You could talk to a:

- Counsellor
- Psychiatrist
- Urogynaecologist
- Social worker
- Gynaecologist
- Pelvic Health Physiotherapist
- Psychologist

The sooner you do so, the sooner you can start your recovery and find coping tools for both at home and at work. By talking about your feelings, you may gain some insight to how and why things happened. It may be a good idea to have a trusted friend/supporter to accompany you if you are a bit nervous about taking this first step. You may also wish to make notes and take them with you.

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GETTING INFORMATION THAT MAY HELP YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT HAS HAPPENED

If you are feeling confused about your experience in hospital, it may help to obtain details of what actually happened. You can do this by contacting the hospital liaison officer or The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. This may provide insight into what interventions were used and why. Whilst this may be painful to relive, you may feel a sense of relief or closure. You could do this by discussing your notes with your midwife or obstetrician.

Be gentle with yourself

Your body has done an amazing thing to give birth so do not feel ashamed if you are struggling to cope. Take it day by day and rest when you can. As difficult as it may be in the early weeks, try to make time for you. Activities as simple as a long soak in the bath, reading a book in the garden, or using other relaxation techniques can all help. Time out to enjoy fresh air and sunshine, perhaps with some gentle or moderate exercise will improve mood and sleep quality.

Nourish your body

Try to nourish your body with good whole foods and avoid processed food and sugars as much as you can. Good nutrition will enable a faster healing process whilst maintaining your energy levels (despite lack of sleep!). If anyone offers help, accept it - ask for food or help around the house. You may also wish to speak with your GP about overall health, or consult a nutritionist, naturopath or dietician for specific advice concerning your nutritional needs. It can also be very beneficial to have full blood checks, including thyroid function, carried out before you seek alternative help.

Health Check-up

Seeking help and support is vital to your recovery after birth trauma. Often women and their families are so focused on the baby that the emotional well-being of the mother takes a lower priority. Some mothers assume things will get better with time; however, recovery from birth trauma is complex and the sooner you seek help the better. Your symptoms may be either physical, psychological or both. Our goal is to enable you to have the confidence to recognise your symptoms and seek the right help for your needs. Putting off seeking help may increase the stress on yourself and those around you, and further delay your recovery.

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