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News Release

New Moms Can Give Themselves a Gift for Mother's Day *Pamper yourself this weekend*

Salt Lake City, UT -- According to the Utah Pregnancy Risk Line (PRL), about 80% of new moms experience what's known as the 'baby blues'. The baby blues typically affect a woman three to five days after giving birth and can last for up to 10 days, with symptoms that include unexplained crying, irritability, and sadness. The PRL is a joint, statewide program of the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) and the University of Utah (U of U) Health Sciences that educates the public, health care providers, and women about drug and other exposures during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

"While many new moms describe experiencing typical baby blues, about 15%- 20% suffer from true postpartum depression, which presents with more severe symptoms and requires immediate medical attention," reports pediatrician Susan Martini, M.D., U of U Health Sciences. Dr. Martini counsels new moms and understands the differences between the baby blues and postpartum depression. Warning signs of postpartum depression often include feeling sad, angry, or irritable for no reason, problems coping, feeling worthless, and having thoughts of harming yourself or a loved one.

The Risk Line has collaborated with Dr. Martini and community agencies to adopt a proven 'tool' to determine if what mom is feeling is the blues or depression. For more information, women can see a new brochure at www.pregnancyriskline.org and answer the two questions to see if they're at risk. The tool also includes depression resources.

"Women with questions about depression during and after pregnancy are some of our most common callers," said Al Romeo, PhD., and nurse with the health line. "That's why

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it’s so important for new moms to take some time for themselves after giving birth. What better time to remind them of that than around Mother’s Day,” he added.

Some strategies to consider:

Boost your vitamin D with a 15- to 30-minute walk. One study showed that being outside for about 30 minutes in the peak daytime produced 1000 IUs of vitamin D and several others suggest vitamin D is a mood lifter. If not deficient in Vitamin D, the usual and safe dose in pregnancy and while breastfeeding is between 600 and 1,000 IUs (International Units) a day.

Sleep is critical for new mothers. Though it can be hard to get, quality sleep helps a mom focus on her needs as well as the baby’s. Sleep disturbances have been shown to be strongly associated with postpartum depression. Women with pregnancy or postpartum insomnia should to talk to their health care provider.

Tell someone if you’re struggling and need a break. Reach out to a partner, girlfriends, and family for help so you can get some rest or take time for yourself in general. If they can’t watch the baby, ask them to clean the house, cook a few meals, or just keep you company.

Representatives from the Pregnancy Risk Line will be available to answer questions about medications during pregnancy or breastfeeding **and will be handing out a new postpartum depression brochure and Power Your Life materials containing free bottles of folic acid during the National Children’s Study celebration at the Gateway on Friday, May 6 from 2-4 p.m.**

Pregnancy Risk Line counselors are available at 1 (800) 822-2229 Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.