

Mother-led infant massage eases maternal postnatal depression, according to studies

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Women who participate in mother-led infant massage sessions show a reduction in symptoms of postnatal depression, according to a review published online Dec. 13 in *PLOS ONE*.

Orla Geary, from the University of Limerick in Ireland, and colleagues conducted a systematic literature review to examine the effectiveness and experiences of mother-led infant massage on symptoms of maternal postnatal depression.

Based on eight studies (521 [women](#) with maternal postnatal depression), the researchers found that all included studies showed a reduction in [depressive symptoms](#) in mothers using infant massage versus those who received routine postnatal care. Findings persisted across various types of research and sample sizes. Additionally, improved mother-infant interactions were seen in women using infant massage.

"Infant massage may reduce symptoms of depression, improve maternal sleep quality, reduce anxiety and [stress levels](#), reduce feelings of guilt and improve maternal confidence, satisfaction and attitude towards [physical contact](#) with their infant," the authors write. "The promotion of a public health nurse-led intervention such as infant massage may provide a blend of social and professional support which advocates for positive maternal well-being and positive parent-infant interactions."

More information: Orla Geary et al, The effectiveness of mother-led infant massage on symptoms of maternal postnatal depression: A systematic review, *PLOS ONE* (2023). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0294156](#)

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