

Postpartum Depression



Having a baby can be one of the happiest events in your life.

- It can be exciting and rewarding.
- It can also be hard and stressful at times.
- You will go through many physical and emotional changes when you are pregnant and after you have your baby.
- These changes can leave you feeling sad, anxious, afraid, or confused.
- These feelings (called the baby blues) go away quickly.

When these feelings do not go away or get worse, you may have postpartum depression (PPD).

- Postpartum depression is a serious problem.
- Call your doctor when these feelings do not go away or get worse.
- At least 1 in 10 new mothers get postpartum depression.
- It can happen a few days or even months after childbirth.

Postpartum depression can happen after the birth of any child, not just the 1st child.

- These feelings are like the baby blues but are much stronger.
- They may keep you from doing the things you need to do every day.
- When this happens, you must call your doctor right away.
- If you do not get help, your symptoms can get worse and last for as long as a year. While this is a serious problem, it can be treated with medication and counseling.

Signs of postpartum depression may range from mild to severe.



Symptoms

Signs of PPD may range from mild to severe. You may have both good days and bad days. Even

though PPD is not the same for every woman, any of the symptoms can be disturbing and leave you feeling ashamed, guilty, and alone.

The signs of postpartum depression may include one or more of the following:	
Overwhelmed	Not being able to eat/weight loss
Hopeless	No interest in your baby
Helpless	Overly worried about your baby
Deep sadness, crying a lot	Withdrawal from family and friends
Restless, irritable	No interest or pleasure in activities
Sluggish, exhausted, no energy	Not enough sleep/unable to sleep
Nervous or jumpy	Sleeping too much
Feeling worthless or guilty	Unable to cope with daily tasks
Thoughts of death, suicide or harming your baby or yourself	

Causes of Postpartum Depression

- No one knows for sure what causes postpartum depression.
- Hormonal shifts that occur after delivery may trigger these symptoms.
- Thyroid levels may also drop sharply after giving birth.
- Low thyroid levels can cause symptoms that can feel like depression, such as mood swings, fatigue, irritability, insomnia, and anxiety.
 - A blood test can tell if this condition is causing your PPD.
 - Your doctor can order thyroid medicine for you.

If you have a personal or family history of depression, you may be more likely to get postpartum depression after your baby is born.

Treatment for Postpartum Depression



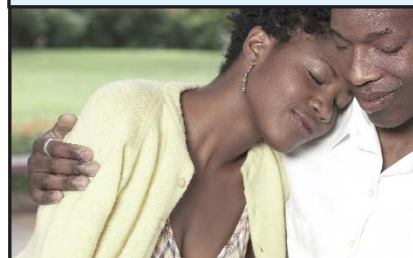
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- Postpartum depression can be treated, and it will go away.
- The type of treatment will depend on how severe the depression is.
- It can be treated with antidepressant pills, counseling, or both.
- If you are breastfeeding, talk with your doctor about taking antidepressants.
- Some of these drugs affect breast milk and should not be used.
- If you have postpartum depression, your doctor may tell you to attend a support group or talk with other women who are having the same problem.

Here are some tips for taking care of yourself:

- **Get enough rest.**
 - Always try to nap when the baby naps.
 - Lack of sleep keeps you from getting your strength back.
 - This is very true if you had a cesarean birth.
- **Ask for help with cooking and daily chores.**
 - Do not try to do everything.
 - Do only as much as you can and leave the rest.
 - Trying to be *super mom* will only add to your stress.
- **Spend time alone with your husband or partner.**
 - Talk about how you are feeling.
- **Do not spend a lot of time by yourself.**
- **Take a short walk, visit a friend, or run an errand.**

Spend time alone with your husband or partner.



- **Join a support group for women with postpartum depression.**
 - Call a local hotline or look in your telephone book for information and services.
 - Talk with other mothers so you can learn from their experiences.
- **Talk to your doctor about medical treatment.**
 - Do not be afraid to tell your doctor your concerns.
 - Your doctor may not know unless you tell him your symptoms.
 - Above all, if you get postpartum depression, it is not your fault.
 - You are not alone, and you will feel better.