

**If You Or Someone
You Know Is Pregnant
Or A New Parent And
Experiencing...**

SADNESS

HOPELESSNESS

EXCESSIVE WORRIES

DIFFICULTY SLEEPING
(EVEN WHEN THE
BABY SLEEPS)

UPSETTING THOUGHTS

GUILT

RECURRENT NEGATIVE
THOUGHTS ABOUT SELF
OR BABY...

Help Is Available!

TREATMENT OPTIONS
MAY INCLUDE:

PSYCHOTHERAPY

SUPPORT GROUPS

MEDICATION

For More Information:

www.postpartum.net

www.mededppd.org

www.ppdsupportpage.com

www.postpartumdadsproject.org

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*A New Baby
And
Your Emotional Health*



*Tips For Understanding
Postpartum Depression
(As Well As Other
Related Conditions)
And
What Can Help*

Having a baby can be a time of great joy and excitement. It can also be emotionally challenging and overwhelming. Many women don't expect to have negative feelings when they are pregnant or have just had a baby. They may believe they shouldn't feel sad or stressed, and if they do have such feelings, may be too ashamed to reach out for help.

Too many women suffer in silence, not knowing that it is actually rather common to experience depression and/or anxiety, both during and after pregnancy. The good news is that perinatal mood disorders are very treatable! Seeking treatment early can help to prevent unnecessary suffering, not only for the woman, but for her baby and family too.

DID YOU KNOW?

10-15% of women experience postpartum depression (PPD) after childbirth.

Symptoms of PPD often begin in pregnancy.

Anxiety during pregnancy and postpartum is also common.

Fathers, adoptive or other non-biological parents who don't experience the physical changes of pregnancy and childbirth may still experience depression and anxiety related to becoming a parent.

SO WHAT'S NORMAL?

“BABY BLUES”

Normal - not considered a disorder. Affects up to 85% of women. Symptoms may include: tearfulness, feeling overwhelmed, irritability and indecisiveness. The onset is usually within days after delivery and should get better within 2-3 weeks.

POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION (PPD)

More severe than the “Baby Blues”. Affects 10-15% of new mothers. Symptoms may include: sadness, loss of interest in activities or relationships, difficulty sleeping (even when the baby sleeps), appetite changes, feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness or thoughts of death. Symptoms that last more than a week or two and/or interfere with functioning may be signs of PPD.

POSTPARTUM ANXIETY

There are several different anxiety disorders. Any of these may be experienced during pregnancy or postpartum.

Generalized Anxiety: Excessive worry, feeling edgy or nervous, irritability, problems with sleep or appetite.

Panic Disorder: Recurrent panic attacks - shortness of breath, increased heart rate, chest pains, dizziness, extreme fear.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): Severe anxiety after a traumatic event. This could include trauma related to childbirth. Symptoms may include: nightmares, re-experiencing of the trauma and avoidant behaviors.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD): Obsessions are intrusive, unwanted, disturbing thoughts or images and may include thoughts of harming the baby.

Compulsions are recurrent repetitive behaviors such as excessive hand washing, checking locks, light switches or repeatedly checking baby's breathing.

POSTPARTUM PSYCHOSIS

Rare - Affects only 1 to 2 out of every 1000 women after childbirth. Symptoms include: loss of touch with reality, not making sense, disorganized or bizarre behavior, strange thoughts, hallucinations or delusions.

Psychosis is an emergency that requires immediate treatment!

RISK FACTORS

You may be at increased risk for a postpartum mood disorder if you have a...

- * prior history of depression, anxiety or other psychiatric disorder.
- * family history of psychiatric disorder.
- * prior history of a postpartum mood disorder.
- * history of PMS or other hormonal sensitivity (e.g. reaction to the pill or fertility treatments).
- * major co-occurring life stressor (e.g. move, job loss, death in the family).
- * traumatic experience during pregnancy or childbirth.
- * baby who is ill.

WHAT CAN HELP

Self-care: Your focus may be on caring for your baby, but remember you need good care too!

Adequate sleep: Not getting enough sleep is probably one of the biggest challenges that new parents face. Finding ways to increase the amount of sleep you get will go a long way in helping your mood and overall well-being.

Proper nutrition and exercise (as appropriate to your physical condition).

Support from family and friends- Ask for help with things like household chores, childcare, taking breaks, and getting sleep.

If any of your symptoms are particularly distressing or don't seem to be getting better, talk with your doctor or other healthcare professional about treatment options.

If you feel that you are at risk of harming yourself or your baby, you should seek immediate help. If necessary, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.