

# Postpartum Depression

*Knowing the signs. Finding help.*



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## Baby Blues

The baby blues is a normal hormonal adjustment that occurs during the first several weeks after birth. Emotions can be intense and may include:

- General moodiness
- Sadness
- Impatience
- Restlessness
- Anxiety
- Crying
- Anger
- Intense protective feelings
- Overwhelmed
- Happiness
- Elation

*Up to 80% of mothers experience baby blues.*

## Postpartum Depression

Postpartum depression or PPD is longer lasting than the baby blues and the mother does not get better over time. It can happen within the first 12 months after birth, and it usually begins within the first 3 months after birth. Its onset is generally unpredictable. It is important for you to reach out to your midwife or other mental health professionals if you or your partner suspects PPD. Please know that PPD is quite common and there are many ways to get help. You are not alone, though it may feel that way. The sooner you reach out, the faster you will recover.

*Up to 10-20% of mothers suffer postpartum depression.*

## How to Prepare for Your Postpartum

- Know that changes come with babies:
  - Less alone time
  - Less sleep
  - Need for help at night
  - Financial strains
  - Relationship changes
  - Need for a "village"
- Prepare for how your infant will be fed:
  - Breast
  - Bottle
  - Donor
  - Pumping
- Line up "helpers"
  - Housework
  - Meals
  - Errands

***A new definition of success:*** A successful day will look much different than it did before you were caring for another life. Consider your day a complete success if you have:

- Brushed your teeth
- Had a nap
- Bathed within your normal routine
- Nourished your baby
- Diapered your baby
- Your baby has napped
- Snuggled with baby
- Interacted with baby

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## Find Support *Local and online*

There are several avenues for care and support:

- Postpartum Support International – [www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)
- Postpartum support groups – Parenting Resources [www.parentingresources.org](http://www.parentingresources.org)
- Local Counselors:
  - Maria Carella – [www.mariacarella.com](http://www.mariacarella.com)
  - Dr. Diane Sanford – [www.dr.dianesanford.com](http://www.dr.dianesanford.com)
  - Elizabeth Lowder – <http://elowder.wix.com/elizabethlowder1>

Risk Factors for PP:

1. Lack of strong support
2. A history of depression/family history
3. Stressful life during or after birth
4. Unplanned or unwanted pregnancy



### Key Information

- Counseling is the most common therapy for mild to moderate PPD
- PPD is believed to be under-reported
- PPD may last for a few weeks up to a year
- PPD affects the baby's and the mother's ability to bond effectively
- PPD affects the baby's development mentally and socially



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If you can find help from friends and family for your first few weeks postpartum, you will have time to rest, heal and establish a bond with your baby.

### Signs of Postpartum Depression

- Lack of hygiene
- Disinterest in self/can't sleep
- Disinterest in baby
- Reckless behavior/Confusion
- Frequent crying
- Overwhelming fatigue/inability to function normally
- Appetite Loss/weight loss
- Thoughts of harming baby/self

### What to Do:

1. Encourage her to talk about her feelings, and listen without judgment.
2. Encourage her to take time for herself. Breaks are a necessity; fatigue is a major contributing factor to worsening symptoms.
3. Don't expect her to be super-housewife just because she's home all day. Pitch-in before she has to ask.
4. Be realistic about what time you'll be home, and come home on time.
5. Schedule a date night and help find a sitter.
6. Reassure her: this is not her fault; she is not alone; she will get better.

*\* From Postpartum Support International*

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