

Postpartum Depression

When caring for your baby is not what you expected

You are not alone

The birth of a baby can bring on a flood of new emotions --- elation, fear, excitement, sadness or worry. It's normal for a new mom to experience a range of emotions. Many women have the "baby blues" just after birth. They have periods of feeling sad, anxious, or irritable. These feelings usually go away within a week or two.

However, for about 20% of women (1 in 5), feelings of agitation, sadness or anxiety are much more intense and last more than 2 weeks. These intense feelings are called postpartum depression. There is no reason to feel embarrassed or ashamed. Postpartum depression is common. It is not anyone's fault and is very treatable. It is also serious and can affect you, your relationships and your baby, if left untreated.

This was my third baby, but it wasn't the happy, joyful experience I had expected. I felt anxious and irritable. I didn't want to get out of bed in the morning. I didn't feel connected with my baby.
-Sharon

We were thrilled to bring home our first healthy baby. But in those first few weeks I felt tired and cried easily. I thought it was just the hormones and getting used to the newborn. After six months, when little things would still set me off, my husband convinced me to talk to my doctor.

-Tina



Stories provided by the Minnesota Department of Health

Postpartum depression may not be present right away. This illness can occur any time in your baby's first year. Women who have history of depression are more susceptible to this illness. Other risk factors include stress, lack of support, hormone changes, trauma and other factors. The symptoms may not go away without treatment. You deserve to enjoy every moment with your baby. If

you think you may have postpartum depression, tell your doctor or another health care provider.

Symptoms

It is easy to confuse the symptoms of postpartum depression with normal hormone changes. How can you tell if it's serious? Watch for these symptoms:

- Feeling sad, anxious or "empty"
- Lack of energy, feeling very tired
- Lack of interest in normal activities
- Changes in sleeping or eating patterns
- Feeling hopeless, helpless, guilty or worthless
- Feeling moody and irritable
- Problems concentrating or making simple decisions
- Thoughts about hurting your baby, even if you will not act on them
- Thoughts about death or suicide

Things you can do

Being a good mom means taking care of yourself. If you take care of yourself, you can take care of your baby and your family.

- Get help. Talk with your care provider, call an emergency support line or ask a loved one to help you get the care you need.
- Ask your care provider about safe medicines used for postpartum depression.
- Talk to a therapist, alone or in a group.
- Ask your faith or community leaders about other support resources.
- Learn as much as you can about postpartum depression.
- Get support from family and friends.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Keep active! Walk, stretch, swim and so on.
- Get enough rest.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Don't give up! It may take more than one try to get the help you need.

The best treatment

The most effective treatments for postpartum depression include:

- Individual or group psychotherapy focused on self care and stress reduction skills.
- Antidepressant medicine that can be safely used while breastfeeding (prescribed by your doctor)

Local Resources

If you are in a crisis call:

Central Minnesota Mental Health Crisis Line:
(320) 253-5555

OR

St. Cloud Hospital Behavioral Access:
(320) 255-5774 ask for the Behavioral Access Nurse

If you are seeking help but are not in a crisis call:

The St. Cloud Hospital Women & Family Specialty Center: (320) 229-4918 ask to schedule an appointment with the Integrated Behavioral Health professional for an assessment for postpartum depression.

OR

Speak with your primary care doctor and tell him or her you are concerned you may have postpartum depression.

National Resources

Crisis Connection: (866) 379-6363;
TTY (612) 379-6377

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
(800) 273-TALK

United Way First Call for Help
2-1-1

Postpartum Support International
www.postpartum.com

Depression after Delivery, Inc.
www.depressionafterdelivery.com

PPD Hope Information Center
www.ppdhope.com

Culturally specific resources are available at the Mental Health Association of Minnesota
www.mentalhealthmn.org

Click on "Referrals & Resources" on the left. Follow the link to "Culturally Sensitive Services."