

THIS ISN'T WHAT I EXPECTED

OVERCOMING POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

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POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION SYMPTOM CHECKLIST

The following is a list of ways you might be feeling now. These are statements often made by women suffering from PPD. Look over the list and check any statements that correspond to your own feelings.

- 1. I can't shake feeling depressed no matter what I do.
- 2. I cry at least once a day.
- 3. I feel sad most or all of the time.
- 4. I can't concentrate.
- 5. I don't enjoy the things that I used to enjoy.
- 6. I have no interest in making love at all, even though my doctor says I'm now physically able to resume sexual relations.
- 7. I can't sleep, even when my baby sleeps.
- 8. I feel like a failure all of the time.
- 9. I have no energy; I am tired all the time.
- 10. I have no appetite and no enjoyment of food (or, I am having sugar and carbohydrate cravings and compulsively eating all the time).
- 11. I can't remember the last time I laughed.
- 12. Every little thing gets on my nerves lately. Sometimes, I am even furious at my baby. Often, I am angry with my husband.
- 13. I feel that the future is hopeless.
- 14. It seems like I will feel this way forever.
- 15. There are times when I feel that it would be better to be dead than to feel this way for one more minute.

Anxiety/Panic Disorder Symptom Checklist

- _____ 1. I can't catch my breath.
- _____ 2. My heart pounds, races, and/or skips a beat.
- _____ 3. My hands shake or tremble.
- _____ 4. I have stomach pains, nausea, and/or diarrhea.
- _____ 5. I get hot flashes or chills.
- _____ 6. I feel that something terrible is about to happen.
- _____ 7. I get dizzy or light-headed.
- _____ 8. Things appear "funny" or "unreal."
- _____ 9. I worry excessively about what might happen in the future.
- _____ 10. I feel like I'm dying or about to have a heart attack.
- _____ 11. I am afraid to leave my house or be alone, because I might have an anxiety attack and not be able to get help.
- _____ 12. I feel numb or tingly in my hands and/or around my mouth.

With all postpartum syndromes, it is important to have a medical examination, to be sure there is no physical illness causing them, as well as a clinical diagnosis by a mental-health professional.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Symptom Checklist

- ___ 1. I experience certain repeated thoughts, urges, or images that I know are ridiculous and that I try to ignore or get off my mind, because they make me feel very anxious and uncomfortable (e.g., horrifying thoughts or images of harming the baby or seeing the baby harmed).
- ___ 2. I worry excessively about purposely or accidentally causing harm to my baby or someone else I love.
- ___ 3. I have extreme doubts or fears and sometimes do certain things or avoid certain things in order to prevent bad things from happening to my baby.
- ___ 4. I have always been a worrier, but now my worrying feels out of control.
- ___ 5. I often ruminate or have thoughts that race and spin around in my head.
- ___ 6. I have a fear of becoming contaminated by germs or my baby getting sick.
- ___ 7. I do certain acts in a particular way repeatedly in order to avoid feeling extremely uncomfortable (e.g., frequent washing or cleaning excessively).
- ___ 8. I am concerned about putting things in a certain order.
- ___ 9. I find I often check and recheck things.
- ___ 10. Sometimes I count or touch certain items in particular ways.
- ___ 11. I often repeat certain activities to ensure that I did them right or to avoid making mistakes that might endanger my baby.
- ___ 12. I avoid certain things, such as knives or sharp objects, to avoid harming my baby.
- ___ 13. I avoid tasks that increase my feelings of vulnerability (e.g., not bathing my baby for fear of sexually abusing my baby).
- ___ 14. I worry excessively that I do not love my baby or that my baby does not love me.

Postpartum PTSD Checklist

- _____ 1. I have experienced one or more severe psychological traumas in the past.
- _____ 2. I have repeated distressing thoughts or images of the traumatic events.
- _____ 3. I have flashbacks about the trauma.
- _____ 4. I avoid triggers that may remind me of the trauma.
- _____ 5. Just thinking about the trauma makes my heart race.
- _____ 6. I am always watching out to try to protect myself and my loved ones from trauma.
- _____ 7. My anger gets the best of me, and sometimes I lash out at people I love over trivial things.
- _____ 8. I don't feel like myself since the trauma.

Postpartum Emergency Symptom Checklist

- ___ 1. I am afraid that I might harm myself in order to escape this pain.
- ___ 2. I am afraid that I might actually do something to hurt my baby.
- ___ 3. I hear sounds or voices when no one is around.
- ___ 4. I do not feel that my thoughts are my own or that they are totally in my control.
- ___ 5. I am being controlled by forces beyond myself.
- ___ 6. I have not slept at all in forty-eight hours or more.
- ___ 7. I do not feel loving toward my baby and can't even go through the motions of taking care of him/her.
- ___ 8. I am rapidly losing weight without trying to.

Negative Thought Patterns Checklist

- ___ 1. I am having trouble accepting that I have postpartum depression.
- ___ 2. I am ashamed and embarrassed that I have PPD.
- ___ 3. I must have done something wrong to make this happen.
- ___ 4. If I were stronger, PPD would never have hit me so hard.
- ___ 5. I can't tell anybody except my husband that this is happening to me.
- ___ 6. If I hold on a little longer, maybe this will go away by itself.
- ___ 7. I must be a weak person.
- ___ 8. I could never see a therapist for this, because that would be admitting that I am not in control.
- ___ 9. I can snap out of this if I try harder.

Influencing Thoughts Since the Birth Checklist

- ___ 1. I like to be in control at all times.
- ___ 2. I should always enjoy being a mother.
- ___ 3. It is important that people tell me that I am doing a good job.
- ___ 4. If I have bad feelings toward my baby, I am a bad mother.
- ___ 5. If I look good from the outside, everyone will think I'm doing fine.
- ___ 6. If I ask for help, people will think I can't do any of this by myself.
- ___ 7. I certainly should be able to keep the house clean, do the laundry, make dinner, and take care of the baby—like everyone else does!
- ___ 8. I should feel loving toward my baby and my husband at all times.
- ___ 9. No one understands what I am going through.
- ___ 10. If I express my fears and weaknesses, then I will be admitting that I am not strong.
- ___ 11. If I admit that sometimes I don't feel like taking care of my baby, then I could not possibly love my baby.
- ___ 12. If I decide to do something just for myself, then I am selfish.

Some Typical Statements Made by Women in the First Few Postpartum Weeks

- ___ 1. I can't stand any of my clothes. My pre-pregnancy outfits are too tight, and it's just too humiliating to wear my maternity clothes.
- ___ 2. I know that everyone says I should sleep when the baby does, but I just can't. There's too much to do during her nap.
- ___ 3. I know that I would feel better if I started exercising again. But who has time to go to the gym?
- ___ 4. Grabbing a candy bar on my way home from work gives me the strength I need to face those first few minutes when I walk in the door and my four-year-old starts whining, and the dog needs to be let out, and the baby wants to be nursed.
- ___ 5. Give up caffeine? No way. I can't. Never. No.
- ___ 6. Why bother taking a shower? There's no one here to see me anyway.

How Do I Know If I Need More Support?

Consider the following statements and check those that apply to you:

- 1. I spend most of my time in the house.
- 2. I have not made any new friends since the birth of my baby.
- 3. I have lost touch with some old friends who meant a lot to me.
- 4. Our families are supportive, but they live far away.
- 5. I have not used any babysitter, except my family members.
- 6. I know my family is trying to help, but sometimes they are just in the way!
- 7. I do not feel as close to my best friend as I used to.
- 8. Neither my family nor my husband's family is supportive.
- 9. I seem to have lost interest in activities that are unrelated to raising my child.
- 10. I *only* have interest in activities that are unrelated to raising my child.
- 11. There is so much to do around the house, I barely go outside anymore.

Social Needs List

Need	Person Who Can Meet This Need	Another Person Who Can Meet This Need
Intimacy (sharing fears, secrets, vulnerabilities)	Example: husband _____	_____
Reassurance	Example: friend or therapist _____	_____
Practical help (child care, housework)	Example: sister, cleaning service _____	_____
Advice	Example: pediatrician _____	_____

Support from Your Husband Checklist

- ___ 1. Sometimes my husband seems distant and emotionally unavailable.
- ___ 2. It is hard to divide my attention and love between my child and my husband.
- ___ 3. I feel like I'm nagging every time I ask my husband to do one little thing.
- ___ 4. My husband is happy to take care of the baby—it's me who never gets any of his affection.
- ___ 5. I think he must be sorry he ever met me.
- ___ 6. We never talk about the things that are wrong: our sex life, the fact that we have no money anymore, or the fact that we can't go ten minutes without an argument.
- ___ 7. I know he's trying to be understanding—it's just that he never says the right thing.