

## Helpful Information

### PHONE HELPLINES AND CONTACTS

IF YOU ARE HAVING  
THOUGHTS OF  
HURTING YOURSELF  
OR YOUR BABY,  
TAKE ACTION NOW

Put the baby in a safe place, like a crib.  
Call a friend or family member for help  
if you need to.

POSTPARTUM SUPPORT  
INTERNATIONAL HELPLINE  
CALL: (800) 944-4PPD (4773)  
~ OR ~  
TEXT: (503) 894-9453  
[www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)

Call a suicide hotline  
(free & staffed all day, every day):

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE  
CALL: (800) 273-TALK (8255)  
~ OR ~  
TEXT: "TALK" TO 741741

To find a psychologist or a  
licensed mental health provider near you,  
ask your OB/GYN, Pediatrician, Midwife,  
Internist or other Primary Healthcare Provider  
for a referral.

*Getting  
the right help  
can make  
all the difference  
for you, your baby,  
and  
your family.*

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*Providing Excellence In Women's Healthcare*

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# postpartum depression & anxiety

*"What's the matter with me?"*

*"I thought this would be  
the happiest time in my  
life but I'm so sad."*

*"I'm so scared I might  
accidentally hurt the baby."*

*"I feel like I'm going crazy."*



## What is it?

*Postpartum depression, feelings of sadness and anxiety can be extreme and might interfere with a woman's ability to care for herself or her family.*

Postpartum depression, anxiety & postpartum psychosis (a condition that may involve psychotic symptoms like delusions or hallucinations) are mood disorders that can affect a woman after childbirth. Mothers with postpartum depression experience feelings of extreme sadness, anxiety, and exhaustion that may make it difficult for them to complete daily care activities for themselves or for others. It likely results from a combination of physical and emotional factors. Postpartum mood disorders do not occur because of something a mother does or does not do.

The condition may begin shortly before or any time after childbirth, but commonly begins between a week or a month after delivery. Because of the severity of the symptoms, postpartum depression usually requires treatment. Whether your symptoms are mild or severe, recovery is possible with proper treatment.

### --- Common Symptoms ---

The warning signs are different for everyone but may include:

- *Feeling sad, hopeless, empty or overwhelmed.*
- *Crying more often than usual, for no apparent reason.*
- *Worrying or feeling overly anxious most of the time.*
- *Sleeping too much.*
- *Trouble concentrating and making decisions.*
- *Irritability, anger, rage, restless, or mood swings.*
- *Losing interest in enjoyable activities.*
- *Disinterest in the baby, family, and friends.*
- *Feeling guilty, worthlessness and doubting ability to care for your baby.*
- *Thinking about harming yourself or your baby, fear of being left alone with the baby (see the referenced phone numbers to call to get immediate help).*

## Is it just the "Baby Blues"?

It is common for women to experience the "baby blues" – this is a term used to describe the feelings of being stressed, sad, anxious, lonely, tired, or weepy following their baby's birth – but some women (up to 1 in 7) experience a much more serious mood disorder --- postpartum depression. Babies require a lot of care, so it's normal for mothers to be worried about or tired from providing that care. Baby blues, which affects up to 80% of mothers, includes feelings that are somewhat mild, last a week or two, and go away on their own.

### POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION CAN AFFECT ANY WOMAN REGARDLESS OF AGE, RACE, ETHNICITY, OR ECONOMIC STATUS

### What Can I Do?

- Don't face postpartum depression/anxiety alone – Seek help from a psychologist or other licensed mental health provider; contact your doctor or other primary health care provider.
- Talk openly about your feelings with your partner, other mothers, friends, and relatives.
- Join a support group for mothers – ask your health care provider for suggestions if you can't find one.
- Find a relative or close friend who can help you take care of the baby.
- Get as much sleep or rest you can even if you have to ask for more help with the baby – if you can't rest even when you want to, tell your primary health care provider.

This checklist will help you start a conversation with our provider. Check the boxes that best describe your experience over the **past 2 weeks**, and take it with you to give to your provider at your next visit.

DEPRESSION CHECKLIST			
In the past two weeks (14 days), how often have you:	A Few Days	Over Half the Days	Every Day
Felt sad or low?			
Felt More tired than usual, or have less energy during the day?			
Felt upset or annoyed at little things?			
Had trouble thinking, concentrating, or making decisions?			
Had no appetite or been eating too much?			
Worried that you might hurt yourself or felt like you wanted to die?			
Had trouble enjoying things that used to be enjoyable?			
Felt like you have no one to talk to?			
Felt that you just can't make it through the day?			
Felt worthless or hopeless?			
Had headaches, backaches, or stomachaches?			
Complete the following questions only if you have given birth to a baby in the last 12 months			
Problems sleeping when your baby sleeps, or sleeping too much?			
Felt numb or disconnected from your baby?			
Had scary or negative thoughts about your baby?			
Worried that you might hurt your baby?			
Felt worried or scared that something bad might happen?			
Felt guilty or ashamed about your job as a mom?			