



Postpartum Depression

Helping You Cope

TRANSITIONING to new parenthood

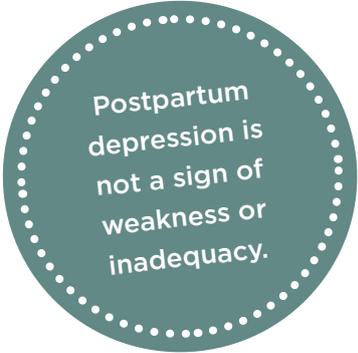
No amount of research and practice can completely prepare you for being a new parent. Your schedule and priorities change, both of which can be exhausting mentally and physically.

When your baby is born, your time and energy will center around him or her. It is completely normal to feel overwhelmed by the new demands you face as you get used to being a parent.

There are risk factors that will help determine if you are at risk for developing postpartum depression. Your risk could increase if you have a family history of depression or if you have experienced postpartum depression after a previous pregnancy. You could also be at risk if you have no support at home after the baby arrives, you have physical or financial worries, or if your baby was unplanned.



BABY BLUES & POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION



Postpartum depression is not a sign of weakness or inadequacy.

After delivery, many mothers experience bouts of sadness. This can often be the “baby blues,” which start within five days after delivery and are caused by hormonal changes in your body. You may feel impatient, irritable or emotional, but remember these

will most likely go away within two weeks.

However, many new moms suffer from a long-lasting and intense depression known as postpartum depression. This type is recognized by symptoms similar to baby blues, but much more intense. These can begin within days or weeks of delivery and can last weeks or even years if not treated.

Symptoms

There are many symptoms of postpartum depression, and vary from woman to woman. It is important to understand that postpartum depression is a real condition and is a reaction to the physical and emotional adjustment to having a baby. It is not a sign of weakness or inadequacy.

- Loss of appetite
- Insomnia
- Feelings of hopelessness and loss of control
- Overwhelming fatigue
- Lack of joy
- Severe mood swings
- Crying spells
- Thoughts of harming yourself and the baby

If you are feeling depressed after your baby's birth, do not be embarrassed. Seek help from your doctor, as postpartum depression can last for years if not treated.

RISK FACTORS

Ten to 20 percent of all new moms suffer from postpartum depression, but many are reluctant to share their feelings and do not report their symptoms. It is important to recognize these symptoms and contact your healthcare provider immediately. With proper treatment, most women fully recover.

There are risk factors that will help you determine if you are at risk of developing postpartum depression. The risk increases if:

- You have a family history of depression
- You have a history of depression or postpartum depression
- You lack adequate support
- You're experiencing financial problems
- The pregnancy was unplanned or unwanted

Treatment

Postpartum depression is often treated with counseling and medication. With proper treatment, it can go away within a few months. It's important to continue treatment even after you feel better. Stopping early can cause relapse.

The first step in getting help with any type of depression is telling someone. Talk to your provider. He or she can start a treatment plan.

There are also steps you can take yourself to help speed up your recovery:

- **Make healthy lifestyle choices**, such as eating healthy food, avoiding alcohol and exercising.
- Be sure to **make time for yourself and your partner**. Let your parents or a friend stay with your baby while you and your spouse have time alone.
- **Avoid isolating yourself**. Connect yourself to family and friends, and be open about your feelings. Surrounding yourself with loved ones will help deter negative feelings.

LOCAL RESOURCES

Yamhill County Public Health

<http://www.co.yamhill.or.us/ccf/index.asp>

Virginia Garcia Clinic

<http://www.viriniagarcia.org/>

Oregon Department of Human Services

<http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/pnh/prams/index.shtml>



Resources:

A New Beginning: Your Personal Guide to Postpartum Care

Willamette Valley Medical Center Birthing Staff

The Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/postpartum-depression/ds00546>



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