

## POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

Depression after pregnancy is called postpartum depression and is one of the most common complications of childbirth. You are not alone. About 1 in 5 new mothers experience symptoms of depression sometime in the first year after delivery. Postpartum Depression (PPD) can affect any new mother regardless of age, race, income, education and/or marital status and seems to be brought on by the changes in your body, environment, and hormones after pregnancy.

Risk factors include prior depression or PPD, family history of depression or bipolar disorder, recent stressful events, illness, and complications in pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding. Untreated PPD can get in the way of mother-child bonding, breastfeeding, and delay a child's development, so prompt treatment is important for both you and your baby.

If you feel you may be suffering from postpartum depression, know that it is not your fault and does not make you a bad mother.

- The best thing you can do for you and your baby is to get help. The more quickly you seek treatment, the sooner you will recover and the less your baby will be affected. Treatment may include medicine or therapy. Your doctor will tell you what's best for you.

### TIPS

- The best thing you can do is seek help
- PPD is temporary and treatable

### SIGNS/SYMPTOMS

Any of these symptoms and others, could indicate that you have postpartum depression. Symptoms can occur anytime during pregnancy or within the first 12 months after child birth.

- Crying and sadness
- Feelings of shame, guilt, or helplessness
- Unexplained anger or irritability
- Lack of connection or interest in the baby
- Irregular sleeping or eating
- Sense of worthlessness
- Fear leaving the house or being alone
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Thoughts of harming the baby or yourself
- Difficulty concentrating or making simple decisions

- No matter how strong the symptoms are, remember that PPD is temporary and you can get better with treatment.

- Important to look out for: Postpartum

## Psychosis

- Rare illness that occurs in approximately 1-2 in 1,000 births. Usually occurs suddenly within the first 3 weeks postpartum.
- Symptoms include: Strange and false beliefs (delusions) such as thinking that someone is watching you or reading your mind, thoughts of harming yourself or your baby, drastically changing moods from feeling happy to depressed, hearing and/or seeing things that no one else does or that you know is not there (hallucinations), decreased need or inability to sleep even when your baby is sleeping, confusion and disorientation, or feeling removed from your baby.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Call your doctor or get help if your signs/symptoms:
  - Don't go away or get better after 14 days
  - Become more severe
  - Include thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
  - Make it difficult to care for your baby or do everyday tasks
- *Seek support*
  - Tell your partner, friends, or family that you are feeling this way as soon as you can
  - Join a support group to talk with other moms who are dealing with depression
- *Self-care*
  - **Rest** - Do what you can to get plenty of rest by getting help from others and sleeping when the baby sleeps. Sleeplessness can make even the smallest emotions intense.
  - **Eat healthy** – Make healthy eating a priority. Use <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> to get started
  - **Lean on others** - Get help caring for the baby and other children you may have.
  - **Walk** – Walking for 15-30 minutes outside can help improve your mood. Walking releases endorphins, which help you feel good and energized.
  - **Breathe or meditate** - For breathing exercises and stress management visit the stress reduction module.
  - **Relax** – Listen to music, read a book, or do something that you liked to do before you had your baby.
  - **More tools** - Use the Sad Scale Smartphone App ([itunes.apple.com/us/app/sad-scale/id308056730?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/sad-scale/id308056730?mt=8)) or MoodTune™ ([braintracercorp.com](http://braintracercorp.com)) to keep track of your mood and energy.
- *Professional Treatment*
  - Find a healthcare provider, counselor, or therapist who understands postpartum depression.
  - Talk with your healthcare provider about what medications and therapy options are available.

## RESOURCES:

If you are thinking about hurting yourself or your baby, please get help right away.

Call a suicide hotline (free):

### **LOS ANGELES 211**

Dial: 2-1-1 or [211la.org](http://211la.org)

### **LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH**

ACCESS Helpline 24/7: 800-854-7771

### **SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER SURVIVOR HOTLINE**

Call inside LA County 24/7: 877-727-4747

### **PPD MOMS**

[PPDMOMS.org](http://PPDMOMS.org): 1-800-PPDMOMS or 1-800-773-6667

[1800ppdmoms.org](http://1800ppdmoms.org)

### **NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION (HAS HOTLINES FOR EVERY STATE)**

Life line: 1-800-273-8255

[samhsa.gov/prevention/suicide.aspx](http://samhsa.gov/prevention/suicide.aspx)

Learn More & Get Help:

### **LOS ANGELES 211**

Dial: 2-1-1 or [211la.org](http://211la.org)

### **POSTPARTUM SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL (PSI)**

800.944.4PPD (4773)

[postpartum.net](http://postpartum.net)

The PSI website has information, resources, and social support for women with mental health issues. PSI's toll-free Help Line, in English and Spanish, refers callers to appropriate local resources including emergency services

### **LOS ANGELES COUNTY PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE**

[maternalmentalhealthla.org](http://maternalmentalhealthla.org)

### **DIRECTORY, LOS ANGELES COUNTY PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE**

[directory.maternalmentalhealthla.org/](http://directory.maternalmentalhealthla.org/)

### **POSTPARTUM PROGRESS**

[postpartumprogress.org](http://postpartumprogress.org)

## BABY CENTER

[babycenter.com/0\\_postpartum-depression-and-anxiety\\_227.bc](http://babycenter.com/0_postpartum-depression-and-anxiety_227.bc)

## HELP GUIDE

[helpguide.org/mental/postpartum\\_depression.htm](http://helpguide.org/mental/postpartum_depression.htm)

## WEBMD INFORMATION ON BABY BLUES AND POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

[webmd.com/depression/postpartum-depression/postpartum-depression-symptoms](http://webmd.com/depression/postpartum-depression/postpartum-depression-symptoms)

Find support groups and connect with moms:

## POSTPARTUM SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL AREA COORDINATORS

[postpartum.net/Get-Help/Support-Resources-Map-Area-Coordiators.aspx](http://postpartum.net/Get-Help/Support-Resources-Map-Area-Coordiators.aspx)

## CAFE MOM – MEETING PLACE FOR MOMS

[cafemom.com](http://cafemom.com)

## THE ONLINE PPD SUPPORT GROUP

[ppdsupportpage.com/](http://ppdsupportpage.com/)

## VIDEOS

### WHAT IS POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

[youtube.com/watch?v=C7rrFWqeOSc](http://youtube.com/watch?v=C7rrFWqeOSc)

### POSTPARTUM EMOTIONS

[marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/postpartum-depression.aspx](http://marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/postpartum-depression.aspx)

### HOW TO RECOGNIZE SYMPTOMS OF POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

[dailymotion.com/video/x122vm\\_how-to-recognize-the-symptoms-of-postpartum-depression\\_lifestyle](http://dailymotion.com/video/x122vm_how-to-recognize-the-symptoms-of-postpartum-depression_lifestyle)

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