

What can I do about it? Should I get help? How do I get help?

Self-Help*

- Get as close to 8 hours of sleep a day as you can
- Maintain a well-balanced diet
- Try your best to find time to exercise
- Practice relaxation, even if just for a few minutes
- Be gentle with yourself and your feelings
- Ask others for support and help
- Have time for yourself away from the baby
- Educate yourself

How dads, partners and other supporters can help

- Encourage her to talk about how she feels
- Help remind her that it's not her fault and she's not a bad mother
- Share in home and child care responsibilities
- Accept help from family and friends
- Remind her how much you care



*The self help ideas are meant to be *in* conjunction with seeking professional care from a qualified healthcare provider. Postpartum symptoms RARELY resolve on their own.

What kinds of treatment and help are available?

Professional counseling-Individual therapy/counseling with a qualified professional

Medication-In partnership and collaboration with your healthcare provider, some women find antidepressants or other appropriate medications helpful

Group therapy— Joining a support group led by a licensed professional

Many women find a combination of one or all of these treatments to work the best. Discuss these options with your provider.

Resources for help

- Your primary care provider and/or your obstetrician
- Your baby's pediatrician, they can help guide you to appropriate care
- Family Advocacy Program, New Parent Support Program 937-257-4608/6429
- Mental Health Clinic 257-6877 opt 2
- National women's health information center:
www.4women.gov
- U.S. Department of health and human services:
www.womenshealth.gov

For life threatening emergencies call 911 and/or go to the nearest ER

Postpartum Depression



Time to dispel myths:

What it *IS*

And

What it is *NOT*

National statistics:

80% of new mothers experience the “baby blues”

10-15% of new mothers experience postpartum depression.

That is approximately **1 in every 7** mothers

Source: www.cdc.gov

Congratulations!



-You just had a new baby and this is *supposed* to be the happiest time of your life.

-Everyone expects you to be the glowing new mother who experiences joy at each giggle or coo, but what is that joy doesn't come to you so easily?

-What if you feel scared or overwhelmed?

-What if instead of feeling adoration for your baby, you feel resentful and inadequate?

-Does this make you a horrible mother? A horrible person?

ABSOLUTELY NOT! What you may be experiencing is postpartum depression

Baby Blues vs Postpartum Depression

Baby Blues

As many as 80% of mothers experience postpartum/baby blues. A certain amount of insomnia, irritability, tears, overwhelmed feelings and mood swings are normal during the first few days after childbirth. These baby blues usually peak around the fourth postpartum day and subside in less than 2 weeks, when hormonal changes have settled down.

Postpartum Depression

One of the main hallmarks of postpartum depression is that it lasts *BEYOND* 2 weeks and can occur up to 1 year postpartum. Symptoms are similar to that of baby blues and cause significant impact and impairment in everyday life.

How do I know if I'm at risk for Postpartum Depression?



While postpartum depression can affect anyone, there are *some* factors that *may* put you at a higher risk:

Personal history of depression/anxiety

Family history of depression/mental illness

Significant hormonal changes

Recent stressful life event, e.g. PCSing, loss of a loved one, deployment

Lack of support from family or friends

Feeling isolated/alone

Marital/partner discord

Sleep deprivation

High expectations of yourself, need to feel in control

Medical problems with you or your baby

Could I have post partum Depression?

- I feel extremely sad and depressed

-I am having crying spells for no apparent reason

-I am having guilty thoughts or feelings of worthlessness/helplessness

-I have lost interest in doing activities I used to find enjoyable.

-I feel inadequate and am resenting my baby and other family members

-I have noticed significant changes in my appetite and/or sleep

-I am having difficulty concentrating

-I find myself withdrawing from family and friends



It is common for women experiencing postpartum depression to have scary thoughts about harming their babies even though it is the last thing they would want to do. In RARE cases, women who do harm their babies actually lose touch with reality (psychosis). Postpartum Psychosis only affects 1-2 out of every 1,000 women. Seek help **IMMEDIATELY** if you feel at any time like you hear or see unusually images/voices, have very bizarre or odd thoughts, or thoughts of hurting yourself or others.