

Postpartum Mood Changes

After a pregnancy, your hormone levels drop quickly as your body adjusts to no longer being pregnant. The sudden change in hormone levels may cause mood changes.

Postpartum blues (“baby blues”) affect about 85% of new moms. Symptoms may include:

- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Mood swings
- Loss of appetite
- Trouble sleeping
- Tearfulness
- Increased sensitivity
- Fatigue

Postpartum depression (PPD) occurs in about 15% of women. It is a form of longer lasting and more intense baby blues. PPD can begin as early as 1 week after childbirth. PPD may include extreme baby blues and these symptoms:

- Anger
- Crying
- Hopelessness
- Feelings of guilt or shame
- Lack of interest in your baby
- Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby

These factors can increase your risk for developing PPD:

- History of depression, anxiety or PPD
- Lack of support in caring for your baby
- Financial or marital stress
- Pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding problems
- Mothers with infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)
- Mothers who have gone through infertility treatment
- Women with a thyroid imbalance or diabetes

Postpartum psychosis is a rare and severe form of depression that only occurs in about 1 to 2 out of every 1,000 new mothers. Women with mental health conditions such as bipolar disorder or schizoaffective disorder are more likely to feel postpartum psychosis.

Contact your healthcare provider if:

- Your symptoms are getting worse
- Your symptoms do not fade after 2 weeks
- You are unable to care for your baby or complete daily tasks

If your symptoms worsen and you feel that you are at risk of harming yourself or others, go to the nearest emergency department or call 911 right away.

Healthcare provider: _____ Phone: _____

Resources

- NorthShore University HealthSystem: Free, confidential, 24-hour postpartum hotline: 866.364.6667
- Postpartum Support International HelpLine: 800.944.4773 or **postpartum.net**
- National Alliance on Mental Illness: 800.950.6264
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800.273.8255, TTY 800.799.4889
- March of Dimes: **marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/postpartum-depression.aspx**