

Postpartum Depression Fact Sheet for Women and Their Support Network

This fact sheet gives basic information about postpartum depression (PPD) and can be helpful to women with PPD and those who support them. For more information or for help finding care, reach out to a health care professional or the 24/7 National Maternal Mental Health Hotline: **1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)**.



What is Postpartum Depression?

“Postpartum” means the time after giving birth. Postpartum depression (PPD) is a mental health condition that affects some women after giving birth.

Feeling sad, anxious, or overwhelmed are some of the signs of PPD. You might not feel connected to your baby, or you might not feel love or care for the baby. These feelings can happen any time, but if they last longer than two weeks, you may have PPD. The signs of PPD can begin during pregnancy or in the months following birth.

What are the signs and symptoms of postpartum depression?

Everyone experiences PPD differently, but here are some common signs:

- Feeling angry or moody
- Feeling sad or hopeless
- Feeling guilty, shameful, or worthless
- Eating more or less than usual
- Sleeping more or less than usual
- Unusual crying or sadness
- Loss of interest, joy, or pleasure in things you used to enjoy
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Possible thoughts of harming the baby or yourself

If you're having these thoughts or feelings, reach out for support. Call **1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)** for 24/7 free confidential support for pregnant and new moms. **If you're in mental health distress or a suicidal crisis, call or text the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988** for free and confidential support.

What are the risk factors for postpartum depression?

PPD is common: About 1 in 8 women report symptoms of postpartum depression in the year after giving birth. You may be more likely to develop PPD if you:

- Had depression before or during pregnancy
- Have a family history of depression
- Experienced abuse or adversity as a child
- Had a difficult or traumatic birth
- Had problems with a previous pregnancy or birth
- Have little or no support from family, friends, or partners
- Are or have experienced domestic violence. For help, visit or call the **National Domestic Violence Hotline — 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)**
- Have relationship struggles, money problems, or experience other stressful life events
- Are under the age of 20
- Have a hard time breastfeeding
- Have a baby that was born prematurely and/or has special health care needs
- Had an unplanned pregnancy



Although there are many reasons why someone may develop PPD, it's important to know that with support and treatment, healing is possible.

To hear how different women experienced signs and symptoms of PPD, go to www.womenshealth.gov/talkingPPD

How can I find support or treatment?

Everyone's journey to healing is unique. There are many ways someone struggling with PPD can get help. The first step is reaching out for support. You can talk to your health care professional, family, friends, or other people you trust for help. Working with a health care professional is a good way to create a plan that will work for you. Here are some ways to get help—they can be used alone or together:

- **Therapy:** Counseling or therapy sessions with a mental health professional can help you understand and cope with your emotions and challenges.
- **Medication:** In some cases, medicine may be prescribed to help manage symptoms.
- **Support groups:** Joining a support group of others experiencing PPD can provide comfort and understanding.
- **Self-care:** Taking care of yourself is important. Do your best to get enough rest, eat food with a lot of nutrients like fresh produce and whole grains, be physically active, and ask for help when needed.
- **Social support:** Reach out to family, friends, or other people you trust who can offer advice or support.

To hear how different women found support for PPD, go to www.womenshealth.gov/talkingPPD

What can I do at home to feel better while getting care for postpartum depression?

It's important to work with a health care professional to support your path to healing. There are also things you can do at home to help you feel better while you're getting help from a professional:

- Talk about your feelings with your partner, supportive family members, and friends.
- Rest as much as you can. Sleep when the baby is sleeping. If this is hard, ask someone you trust to watch the baby so you can rest.
- Don't try to do everything by yourself. Ask your partner, family, and friends for help with things like childcare, housework, and grocery shopping.
- Make time for breaks, spending time with your partner, or visiting with friends. Find places where you can also bring your baby.
- Talk with other mothers to learn from their experiences.
- Join a support group. Ask your health care professional about groups in your area.
- When possible, don't make any major life changes right after giving birth, like moving or starting a new job. These can cause unneeded stress.

What are the most important things for me to know?

- Many women experience PPD.
- While it can feel hard or lonely, healing is possible.
- The first step is to reach out for help and information. Call the **National Maternal Mental Health Hotline: 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)**.
- Visit www.womenshealth.gov/talkingPPD.



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