

# Tips for Talking with a Health Care Professional About Postpartum Depression

Postpartum depression (PPD) is common and treatable. About 1 in 8 women report symptoms of PPD in the year after giving birth. There are many ways someone struggling with PPD can get help. The first step is reaching out for support. Working with a health care professional is a good way to create a plan that will work for you.

## Prepare Ahead of Your Visit

Health care professionals are often rushing between patients. You can make the most of your time by preparing ahead of your visit.

- **Write down your questions:** Make a list of things you want to talk about and any questions or concerns you have. If you have questions about taking medication while breastfeeding, make sure to include those questions on the list.
- **List your medications:** It is important to tell health care professionals about all the medicines you take. These include medicines given to you by a health care professional as well as things you can buy without a prescription like pain medicines, vitamins, and supplements. You can use this [worksheet](#) to keep track of your medications.
- **Check your family history:** It's important to know your family's physical and mental health history. Sharing these details with your health care professional helps them assess your risk of developing PPD, ask you about symptoms you may be experiencing, give you advice on how to lower your risk, and help find treatment that works for you.

## Consider Bringing a Friend or Relative

Sometimes it is hard to remember everything a health care professional says in an appointment, especially if you are not feeling well. Having a friend or family member with you can be helpful. They can provide support, help you explain your experience, write down important things, and help you remember what was discussed in the appointment. You can ask your friend or family member to join you for some or all of the appointment.

## Be Honest

It is important to be honest with a health care professional about how you feel. What you share with them is private and they cannot tell anyone without asking you first. Tell them how you feel, when it started, and how often it happens. It is also important to share any major sources of stress or big changes that have happened in your life recently.

Below is a list of common PPD signs and symptoms. Check the boxes that relate to how you feel. You may want to show this list to your health care professional to help explain how you have been feeling.

- 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

## Ask Questions

If you have questions or concerns, you can always ask your health care professional for more information. If they suggest a treatment that you don't feel comfortable with or don't know much about, share your concerns, and ask about other treatment options. It is important to know that not every treatment works for everyone. You might need to try different treatments, or a combination, to see what works best for you. You may see more than one health care professional to find the best treatment for you.

## Resources

### Preparing for your appointment

- [National Institute on Aging: Talking with Your Doctor Worksheets](#)

### Reproductive and mental health information

- [Office on Women's Health: Reproductive Health and Mental Health](#)

### Medicine and pregnancy information

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Treating for Two](#)
- [U.S. Food and Drug Administration: Medicine and Pregnancy](#)

### Medication and breastfeeding information

- [National Institute of Child Health and Human Development: LactMed Database](#)
- [MotherToBaby: Information about Medications in Pregnancy and Lactation](#)

For immediate support and help you can reach out to:

**Call 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)** for 24/7 free confidential support for pregnant and new moms.

If you are in mental health distress or have a suicidal crisis, call or text the **Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** at **988** for free and confidential support.

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To learn more, visit  
[www.womenshealth.gov/talkingPPD](http://www.womenshealth.gov/talkingPPD)

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