

Guide to Identifying Support for Postpartum Depression

If you are feeling overwhelmed or want support now, call or text the **National Maternal Mental Health Hotline** at **1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)**. TTY users can use a preferred relay service or dial **711** and then **1-833-852-6262**.

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.

Every woman is different, and your situation and journey will be your own. This resource will help you learn about postpartum depression (PPD), find personal and community support, and find professional help.

Learn About Postpartum Depression

“Postpartum” means the time after giving birth. Postpartum depression, or PPD, is a common mental health condition. About **1 in 8 women** report symptoms of PPD in the year 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. You might even feel like harming yourself or your child. If these feelings last longer than two weeks, you may have PPD. These symptoms are real, and reaching out for help is important.

For more information on PPD, access our resources at [womenshealth.gov/talkingPPD/toolkit](https://www.womenshealth.gov/talkingPPD/toolkit).

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

Finding Support

Identify the support that you need

Women experience PPD in different ways and at different levels of intensity. **The symptoms are real and their impact on your life is real. Getting support and help is important for you and those you love.**

Figuring out what you need is an important step in getting support. You might need support to take care of yourself, the baby, or your overall daily life. Think about what you need help with and who might be able to support you. **The table to the right gives some examples.**

What I Would Like Help With	Who Could Help
My thoughts and feelings	My midwife/doula A therapist PPD support group My partner A friend
Taking care of the baby so I can get more sleep, have time to myself, and see friends	My partner Family member Local childcare
Helping with household tasks	My partner A friend A neighbor Postpartum doula
Feeling less alone as a new mom	New moms' support group Baby café A friend Family members who have young children



Create a Home Team

After identifying the support that you need, and who could help, reach out. Share what you feel comfortable with about your PPD journey and ask for help.

If you don't know where to start, ask for general support. For example, you can say “I'm having a really hard time and need help, but I don't know what to ask for. Could we talk this through together?” Work together to plan. Ask if they would be willing to reach out to other people for you if needed.

Ask for the specific support you need. Support can look like getting a ride to appointments, picking up groceries, or watching the baby for you while you have a break. For example, you can say “I haven't been able to get enough sleep, so I don't feel well. Could you watch the baby for a few hours during the week so I can rest?”

Your needs may change over time. Work with your home team to adjust the plan as needed.



Create a Community Team

You may not have support from people close to you, or you might find it easier to get help in the community. Creating a community team is a good way to find local support. Here are some examples of groups that might be a part of your community team:

- Virtual or in-person support groups for new moms
- Breastfeeding groups and coalitions
- Family resource centers and other social service organizations
- Faith-based groups and services

For help finding resources, check out our Postpartum Depression Resource Guide at womenshealth.gov/talkingPPD/toolkit.



Finding Professional Help

Treatment options

Some women may not think it's important to take care of themselves when they have a new baby but help and support are crucial for healing from PPD. Working with a health care professional is a good way to make a plan and find the tools that will work for you. Here are some ways to get help—these 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 PPD symptoms.
- **Support groups:** Joining a support group of others experiencing PPD can provide information, 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.



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Finding a Health Care Professional

If you have a health care professional you trust, make an appointment to share your symptoms and create a plan. If they aren't able to help, ask them to refer you to another professional who can.

There are many types of professionals who can connect you with resources and treatment. Consider those who you've worked with before and during pregnancy. Examples include:

- Doctors, like your primary care physician, obstetricians and gynecologists (OB/GYN), and pediatricians
- Nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and midwives
- Allied health professionals, such as doulas, home visitors, lactation consultants, and others who work with women
- Mental health providers, such as counselors, psychologists, clinical social workers, or nurse practitioners who specialize in women's issues and working with new mothers.

If you don't know where to start, reach out to your primary care professional or ask someone close to you to help find options.

Below are resources if you need help connecting with a health care professional:

- **Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:** if you are in crisis, call or text 988 for free access to a trained crisis counselor. TTY users can use a preferred relay service or dial 711 then 988.
- **National Maternal Mental Health Hotline:** call or text 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262). TTY users can use a preferred relay service or dial 711 and then 1-833-852-6262. Care is available 24/7.
- **Postpartum Support International:** visit their [website](#).
- **Find a local health center** [in your area](#).
- **Talk to someone you trust** like family, friends, or other moms. They can listen and help you find local health care options.
- **Look for support groups** in your area that give women with PPD the opportunity to meet up and talk. Women in these groups can provide suggestions about good health care professionals.
- **Reach out to local community organizations** like social service agencies, or family resource centers. They may be able to refer you to local health care professionals with expertise in PPD.
- **Check online sources to find local support.** Search for websites or social media groups where women discuss PPD. They may have information about local health care resources.

Self-Care for Postpartum Depression

It's important to work with a health care professional to support your path to healing. But 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. Major life changes—in addition to having a new baby—can cause unneeded stress.



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