

Patients - Depression

Postpartum Depression | Information for Parents

What is postpartum depression?

Postpartum depression is a type of depression that occurs after pregnancy and can happen to anyone. There are many things that can lead to postpartum depression such as life stress, hormonal changes, and the demands of becoming a new parent.

You might be more likely to experience postpartum depression if you experienced postpartum depression during a previous pregnancy and/or if you have a personal or family history of depression or bipolar disorder.

What does postpartum depression feel like?

Individuals with postpartum depression may describe feeling unusually exhausted, overwhelmed, or sad, which may make it challenging for daily functioning. Some other common symptoms include:

- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Abnormal appetite, weight changes, or both
- Trouble bonding or forming an attachment with your baby
- Uncertainty about your ability to be a successful partner and/or parent
- Occasional thoughts about death, suicide, or harming oneself or the baby

How does postpartum depression differ from “baby blues”?

The term “baby blues” is used when a new parent experiences mild mood changes and/or increased feelings of worry, tiredness, and sadness within the first two weeks after childbirth. If these feelings persist beyond 2 weeks, then you may have postpartum depression. Only a healthcare provider can determine whether or not your symptoms are due to postpartum depression. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms please contact your healthcare provider.

Treatment options

If you believe you might be experiencing symptoms of postpartum depression, it will be important to talk to your healthcare provider so that you all can collaboratively create a plan that will help you feel better. Treating your postpartum depression is not only important for your health, but also for the health of your baby!

Most parents see an improvement in their symptoms with a proper treatment plan. The best ways to treat postpartum depression include medications, therapy, or a combination of the two. In terms of counseling,

most parents seek out a therapist who specializes in postpartum and/or maternal mental health. In regards to medications, parents should work with their doctor to determine if medications would be appropriate for their concerns.

Common issues

Oftentimes it can be difficult for parents to ask for help, especially if they are experiencing symptoms of postpartum depression. However, feelings of stress and isolation can increase your feelings of depression, so we encourage you to use your support system during this time. Talk to your partner, family members, friends, and healthcare provider to discuss ways they can offer support.