Perinatal Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

I have thoughts of harming my baby... Should I be concerned?

17 out of 100 women experience unwanted thoughts after giving birth

2-3 women out of 100 are diagnosed with OCD during pregnancy

OBSESSIONS - repeated unwanted thoughts

Compulsions
- Repeatedly washing and sterilizing clothes, toys, bottles
- Waking baby up multiple times at night
- Questioning if you hurt your baby

COMPULSIONS - behaviors done to improve anxiety and lessen obsessive thoughts

Obsessions
- What if I hurt my baby?
- What if I make my baby sick?
- What if I touch my baby inappropriately?
- What if I make a wrong decision?
**Perinatal O.C.D.**

**What is it?**
Perinatal O.C.D. is an anxiety disorder which happens during or after pregnancy. It interferes with the parent’s ability to function.

**Could this be postpartum psychosis?**
It could be, but it is very unlikely. With PPP the woman typically has little insight into her thoughts. Rather than fearing her thoughts, she accepts them and believes them to be true and possible. Be sure to talk to your clinician about your worries.

**Does it go away?**
Some people have symptoms which worsen with pregnancy or when postpartum. For most people, their thoughts and behavior get better within the first year after delivery.

**What kind of treatment is available?**
There are several medications available to alleviate symptoms. There are specific psychotherapies which also work well to make your symptoms go away.

**Do you need help?**
Help is available. Tell your obstetrician or midwife how you are feeling. Ask your primary care provider for assistance and advice. OCD Foundation. Postpartum Support International.

www.peace4momsga.org

V1.0 J. Mierl MS4 LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine