

Post-Partum Depression (PPD)

PPD is a medical condition. It is not due to a personal weakness.

Who gets Post-Partum Depression?

A least three women in ten experience significant emotional difficulty following delivery. Post-partum Depression (PPD) can be much more than the brief “Baby Blues” that most women experience for a few days after they deliver. Mothers with PPD feel increasingly worse. Their symptoms may last months, or even years, if left untreated.

Risk factors for PPD include lack of support at home and a history of depression. PPD is more common when the baby is premature, unhealthy or colicky. An accumulation of life stresses such as loss of job, moving, money problems or divorce can also make PPD more likely. Many women with PPD don't have any risk factors.

What are the dangers of PPD?

PPD can interfere with your ability to care for your baby, disrupt relationships, and lead to accidents. In rare cases women may harm themselves or their babies.

What are the symptoms of PPD?

- **Depressed Mood.** Sometimes life can seem hopeless when it should be joyous. They may not want to leave the house.
- **Anxiety.** Some mothers experience intense worries. They fear being alone with the baby or they worry constantly about the baby's health.
- **Irritability.** Some women express inability to control their feelings. They may take their frustrations out on their children, their spouse or even their baby.
- **Fatigue.** All new mothers are tired, but mothers with PPD are often so exhausted that they feel something must be physically wrong.
- **Loss of Enjoyment.** What used to be a pleasure may seem unappealing. Sex, eating, or the company of loved ones may not seem enjoyable.
- **Not Coping.** Mothers may feel overwhelmed by their work load. It may seem like nothing they set out to do ever gets done.
- **Tearfulness.** Many women say they cry for no apparent reason.
- **Negative Body Image.** Women may become frustrated with body changes brought on by pregnancy and fatigue.



Note!

24 hour
nurse
on call!

What is the treatment for PPD?

Fortunately, effective treatment is available. A combination of medication, increased support from family and an opportunity to express feelings to a medical professional are recommended.

Therapy should start as soon as possible because it can take up to two weeks for medications to take effect. Usually the treatment is complete in two to six months. Symptoms can return if treatment is stopped too soon.

Things you can do:

- Identify someone you can talk to
- Take every opportunity to rest and get enough nourishment
- Get enough nourishment
- Find some time for yourself and your partner
- Take advantage of help when offered
- Remember, PPD is not your fault
- **Please call us! ...especially if you feel that you may harm yourself or your baby!**