

Postpartum Depression

Many women can experience mood symptoms during the postpartum period. These can be categorized as postpartum blues, postpartum depression, and postpartum psychosis, which are distinct syndromes that require identification, education, and treatment.

Postpartum Blues is considered the mildest form of depression and can occur in 40-85% of deliveries. Symptoms usually occur between 3-5 days after delivery and usually resolve within 24 to 72 hours. Some symptoms of postpartum blues can be:

- Depressed mood
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Confusion
- Crying Spells
- Mood lability
- Disturbances in sleep and appetite

Postpartum blues does not usually require medical treatment, but rather with supportive care and reassurance these symptoms will pass. If you have any questions or concerns, please call your healthcare provider.

Postpartum Depression can occur in 10-15% of deliveries and up to 26-32% of all adolescent deliveries. Postpartum Depression is becoming an increasingly recognized disorder, which requires medical treatment. Unlike postpartum blues, which usually occurs soon after delivery and lasts a short period of time, postpartum depression occurs later and symptoms are present for more than two weeks. Some symptoms of postpartum depression can be:

- Depressed mood
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Psychomotor agitation or retardation
- Fatigue
- Changes in appetite or sleep
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Feelings of failure at motherhood
- Excessive anxiety over the infant's health

If you feel you may be suffering from postpartum depression, please take the time to fill out the enclosed Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale and contact your healthcare professional. Postpartum Depression can affect your newborn baby, so please call your healthcare provider.

Postpartum Psychosis is a much more rare disorder that occurs in fewer than 1% of deliveries. Some symptoms of postpartum psychosis may occur within the first four weeks of delivery. This disorder is associated with odd or delusional beliefs about the infant. The mother may also experience hallucinations. Postpartum psychosis is a psychiatric emergency requiring immediate medical attention and possible hospitalization.

If you or someone you know may be suffering from postpartum psychosis please contact your healthcare provider immediately or go to the nearest emergency room.