

# Common Causes and Symptoms of Postpartum Depression



Health and Wellness

Once a woman has given birth to her baby, she commonly feels a combination of many different emotions. It often takes a few weeks for hormones to stabilize and the women to recover from the physical strain of giving birth. A new baby requires attention day and night, which can leave the mother overtired and emotionally exhausted.

## Why Mothers May Feel Depressed After Childbirth

Though many people view motherhood and having a child as happy occurrences, these changes can leave others feeling depressed. Hormones and bodily changes factor into these feelings, even at a time many expect to be joyful.

Here are some reasons a mother may feel depressed after childbirth:

- **There is not enough bonding time.** Sometimes mothers get depressed because so many people are around during and after childbirth. These mothers may feel as though they have inadequate amounts of time to spend with their child.
- **She has difficulty adjusting to her new life as a mother.** Some mothers may have trouble adjusting to life as a new parent. Sometimes a new mother can feel like she is no longer her “old self.”
- **Her experience is different than what was imagined.** Adjusting to the reality may be difficult.
- **She is overwhelmed with the responsibilities that having a child brings.** New mothers may feel unable to do many of the things that they used to do before a baby came into their lives.
- **An extended stay in the hospital after childbirth triggers depression.** Staying in the hospital or the experience of labor may factor into depressed feelings.
- **She is still in pain from giving birth.** Pain from giving birth and changes to the body may contribute to the depression.

## Symptoms of Postpartum Depression

- Sluggishness, fatigue and exhaustion
- Sadness
- Hopelessness
- Appetite and sleep disturbances

- Poor concentration and/or confusion
- Memory loss
- Uncontrollable crying and irritability
- Lack of interest in the baby
- Fear of hurting self
- Exaggerated highs or lows
- Lack of interest in sex
- Lack of interest in appearance

## Some Ways to Cope

Postpartum depression can be treated. The sooner it is diagnosed, the sooner it can be treated. But you must get professional help to be diagnosed and treated. If you have symptoms of postpartum depression, you can do a lot to improve your situation. In addition to talking with a doctor, it's important to take the following steps:

1. Lean on your family and friends for support. By talking with friends and relatives who have children, you may also find others who have dealt with similar emotions.
2. Share your feelings, no matter how frightening they may seem, with your partner.
3. Try to create some private time for yourself.
4. Get the support of your partner, and ask for help with cooking, cleaning and taking care of the baby. And don't be afraid to speak up when you feel overwhelmed.

**Getting help for postpartum depression starts with recognizing the symptoms. If you or a loved one is living with postpartum depression, seek advice from your doctor right away.**

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