

NEW MOTHER FACT SHEET

Postpartum Depression



A type of depression that affects one in 10 new mothers after childbirth



Signs

- Crying often or tearfulness.
- Inability to complete daily tasks.
- Sleeping too much or too little.
- Lack of joy in life.
- Feeling guilty, hopeless or helpless
- Severe mood swings.
- Trouble concentrating and making decisions.
- Withdrawal from family and friends.
- Excessive concern or lack of concern for your baby.
- Thoughts of harming oneself or your baby.
- Lack of interest in sex.



What to Know

- Symptoms of postpartum depression may begin two to four weeks after delivery and may last three to 12 months.
- There is no single cause for postpartum depression. Physical, emotional and lifestyle factors all may play a role.
- Mothers need to know postpartum depression is not their fault or a sign of weakness.
- Postpartum depression can be treated successfully by your health-care provider and/or a mental health professional. Without treatment, it may worsen or last longer.
- Your support systems, such as family and friends, need to be aware of the signs of postpartum depression.

Risk Factors

- Previous postpartum depression.
- A history of depression (during pregnancy or at other times).
- A history of severe premenstrual syndrome.
- A difficult marriage or relationship.
- Stressful recent life events.
- Hormonal imbalance.
- Complications of pregnancy and delivery.
- A history of childhood abuse, including emotional, physical or sexual abuse.
- An unplanned or unwanted pregnancy.

What To Do

- Recognize the signs and risk factors.
- Contact a health-care provider for an evaluation. Treatment may include supportive counseling and /or the use of antidepressant medication.
- If symptoms do not improve within two to four weeks, return for a reevaluation.
- Do not quit your medications without asking your health-care provider.
- Reach out to family and friends for support.



When To Call Your Health-Care Provider

Call for any symptoms of depression lasting two or more weeks.

If you experience any of the following episodes, **call 911 for immediate help:**

- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
- Confusion that interferes with daily activities
- Hallucinations
- Delusions



For information about support and referrals, call the Crisis Hotline at 2-1-1 or 800-472-2911.

