

Your Health After Pregnancy: Postpartum Depression and Anxiety



Mental healthcare is important! Your healthcare team is here to support your mental and emotional health needs.

As many as 1 in 5 people face mental health issues during pregnancy or in the year following delivery. If you have any thoughts of harming yourself, harming your baby, or feel like you cannot care for yourself or your child, **dial 988 at any time or visit <https://988lifeline.org/>.**

Emotional ups and downs after giving birth are common. “Baby blues”, or temporary mood changes after giving birth, affect most people. It is important to recognize the signs and symptoms of more serious mental health concerns like postpartum mood disorders and know how to find support.



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What is postpartum depression?

Postpartum depression is a type of depression that causes intense feelings of sadness or despair that can keep people from being able to do their daily tasks. Postpartum depression can happen up to one year after giving birth, but commonly starts around one to three weeks after birth.



Symptoms of postpartum depression:

- Difficulty accomplishing daily tasks like getting out of bed, showering, eating
- Excessive tiredness, difficulty sleeping, or sleeping too much
- Low interest in daily activities
- Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness
- Difficulty concentrating



What is postpartum anxiety?

Postpartum anxiety is a feeling of nervousness, worry, or concern that gets in the way of daily life. Postpartum anxiety can happen up to one year after giving birth, but commonly starts in the first six weeks after birth. Anxiety disorders are some of the most common mental health conditions, with one in five adults having an anxiety disorder.



Symptoms of postpartum anxiety:

- Feeling excessive worry or fear, racing thoughts
- Fast heartbeat, dizziness, headaches or nausea
- Trouble sleeping

Listen to **Fourth Trimester: Postpartum Mental Health** to learn more.



Scan here or visit the link below:
<https://womenshealthcast.podbean.com/e/4thtri-mental-health/>



What are the treatment options for postpartum mood disorders?

Your doctor can offer several options to help with postpartum mood concerns:

Counseling:

Counseling or therapy is often the first treatment your doctor may suggest. Therapy includes meeting with a mental health professional, talking about your feelings and concerns, and getting strategies to help manage your symptoms.

Medication:

Some people may also benefit from medications like antidepressants or mood-stabilizing drugs. You and your ob-gyn can talk about which medications are safe to take during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.

Lifestyle changes:

There may be things you can change in your daily life to help with anxiety and depression, including:

- Getting regular exercise
- Eating a nutritious, well-balanced diet
- Limiting caffeine and sugar



If I take a medication for a mood disorder, should I stop that medication while pregnant or breastfeeding?

Talk to your doctor before stopping any medications that have been working for you. Treating your anxiety, depression, or mood disorder is good for your health and your baby's health. You and your ob-gyn can talk about which medications are safe to take during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.



More Resources

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
– dial 988 at any time or visit
<https://988lifeline.org/>

National Maternal Mental Health Hotline – dial 1-833-943-5746 or visit
<https://go.wisc.edu/m4431h>

Postpartum Support International, Wisconsin Chapter:
<https://psichapters.com/wi/>

Public Health Madison Dane County Community Resource Guide:
<https://go.wisc.edu/157hcq>

Postpartum Depression FAQs –
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
<https://go.wisc.edu/6u0s5c>

Postpartum Anxiety FAQs –
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
<https://go.wisc.edu/43bg49>