



"Baby Blues" and Postpartum Depression

Moms and Dads, whether they are new parents, parents of multiple children, and/or adoptive parents, may experience the "baby blues" or postpartum depression.

"Baby Blues"

Experiencing the "baby blues" is common among parents. Recognizing and understanding the signs and symptoms of the "baby blues" can help you manage your physical and emotional feelings as you adjust to your new baby and your new normal. The symptoms of the "baby blues" generally last a week or two after bringing your baby home and may be managed with self-care and support.

If you are experiencing the "baby blues" you may feel any or all of the following emotions and/or conditions:



Sadness



Crying/Weepy



Anxiety



Thoughts That You Feel *Off*



Mood Swings



Trouble Sleeping



Lack of Energy



Unable to Concentrate



Impatience

Understanding that these emotions and feelings will not last forever can be helpful as you manage these or similar feelings. Some other healthy ways to manage the "baby blues" include the following:



Take time for yourself, and do something you enjoy.



Reach out to friends and family whom you find supportive. Talk with them about how you are feeling.



Think about the positive aspects of being a parent. What are you doing well? What qualities do you love about your baby?



Eat healthy meals and snacks, and drink plenty of water.



Sleep when your baby is sleeping.



Connect with a local support group for new parents, or call a hotline to talk with a professional.



Make time to rest, and enjoy quiet time when available.



Postpartum Depression

Experiencing postpartum depression is different than experiencing the "baby blues," and it affects a smaller percentage of parents. In addition, the symptoms are generally more intense and tend to last longer.

The emotions associated with postpartum depression can start as early as the first few weeks after you bring your baby home, and the symptoms and feelings can last for many weeks or well into your baby's first year of life. Recognizing the signs of postpartum depression is the first step you can take to begin regaining your

feelings of calm and self-control. If you have any of the symptoms listed below, you should speak with a healthcare provider because only a professional can make diagnoses and provide treatment options.



Very Depressed



Highly Emotional



Angry and Irritable



Unable to Bond with Your Baby



Very Low Energy



Unable to Get Out of Bed and Care for Your Baby



Feelings of Guilt



Severe Mood Swings



Thoughts of Harming Yourself or Your Baby



Safety Alert!

If you feel you may hurt yourself or your baby, put your child in his or her crib or another safe place and call for help right away.

Postpartum depression is a form of clinical depression. If you are experiencing the symptoms of postpartum depression, **TAKE ACTION IMMEDIATELY!**

Arrange an appointment with your healthcare provider. Licensed professionals can connect you with appropriate resources such as peer-support groups; individual or group counseling; or more intensive treatment, if necessary.

During your appointment, health care providers may ask you questions such as:

- What symptoms are you experiencing?
- At what intensity are you experiencing them?
- How long have you been feeling this way?
- Are your symptoms getting in the way of your daily routine? If so, to what extent?
- Are you using any drugs or alcohol? If so, to what extent?
- Are you having thoughts of hurting yourself or your baby?

You must be honest and open with your healthcare provider. He or she can help you feel better!



Postpartum depression is treatable. The sooner you get support, the sooner you will be able to manage your emotions and adjust to your new circumstances and enjoy your new family. You may feel you are immune to experiencing postpartum depression, but it can affect anyone, even if your new baby is not your first child.

How to Get Help

 **In an emergency, call 911.**



Postpartum Support International

1-800-944-4773

<https://www.postpartum.net/>



Postpartum Progress

<https://postpartumprogress.com/>



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8225

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Additional resources, skills, and strategies for parents are available at no cost through the online Thrive Initiative programming. Visit the Thrive website <https://thrive.psu.edu>, and sign up today!