

Fast Facts

Postpartum Depression

- Typically starts in postpartum period (begins with child's birth and lasts at least six weeks)
 - Isn't a single cause, but physical and emotional issues are thought to play a role
 - Physical changes are most likely related to the dramatic drop in hormones (estrogen and progesterone) in your body that happen after birth
- Other hormones produced by your thyroid gland also may drop sharply, which can make you feel tired, sluggish, and depressed
 - Emotional issues can be correlated to being sleep-deprived, anxious, and overwhelmed, making it challenging to handle even minor problems
- Also, may feel less attractive, struggle with your sense of identity, or feel that you've lost control over your life
 - Any new mother can have postpartum depression
 - Can occur after the birth of any child, not just your first one
- Divided into three levels – baby blues, postpartum depression, postpartum psychosis (rare)
- If not treated, postpartum depression can interfere with bonding and cause family problems
 - Can progress to a chronic depressive disorder

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<p><i>Baby Blues:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mood swings -Anxiety -Sadness -Irritability -Feeling overwhelmed -Crying -Reduced concentration -Appetite problems -Trouble sleeping <p><i>Postpartum Depression:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Depressed mood -Severe mood swings -Excessive crying -Difficulty bonding with your baby -Withdrawing from family/friends -Loss of appetite or eating much more than usual -Inability to sleep (insomnia) or sleeping too much -Overwhelming fatigue -Loss of energy -Reduced interest/pleasure in activities you used to enjoy -Intense irritability and anger 	<p><i>Baby Blues:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Get as much rest as you can -Accept help from family/friends -Connect with other new moms -Create time to take care of yourself -Avoid alcohol/recreational drugs <p><i>Postpartum Depression:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Psychotherapy -Medication -Both <p><i>Postpartum Psychosis:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Done at hospital -Combination of medications -Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) 	<p><i>Take care of yourself:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Get physical activity daily -Get adequate rest by sleeping when your baby is sleeping -Eat healthy foods -Avoid alcohol -Set realistic expectations (don't pressure yourself to do everything) -Get out of the house to do something that you enjoy, visit with friends, or have alone time with your partner -Avoid isolation by talking with your partner, family, and friends about how you're feeling

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Fear that you're not a good mother -Hopelessness -Feelings of worthlessness/shame/guilt/inadequacy -Diminished ability to think clearly/concentrate/ make decisions -Restlessness -Severe anxiety -Panic attacks -Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby -Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide <p><i>Postpartum Psychosis:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Confusion/disorientation -Obsessive thoughts about your baby -Hallucinations/delusions -Sleep disturbances -Excessive energy/agitation -Paranoia -Attempts to harm yourself or your baby 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Don't be afraid to ask for help
<p>Note: New fathers can have postpartum depression too! It's called paternal postpartum depression and has the same negative impacts on relationships and child development as postpartum depression in mothers.</p> <p>Typically, the same symptoms are the same as new mothers, such as feeling sad/fatigued/overwhelmed, experience anxiety, or have changes in their usual eating and sleeping patterns</p>		

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