

Postpartum Depression



The birth of a baby can trigger a mix of emotions, from excitement and joy to fear, guilt, and anxiety. Experiencing homesickness, exhaustion, or self-doubt during the first few hours or up to 2 weeks after giving birth is common, which is known as the "baby blues." However, if these emotions become more acute and last longer, it could be postpartum depression. This is a mood disorder in which feelings of sadness, loss, hopelessness, anger, and frustration interfere with daily life, directly affecting the mother's emotional stability and, therefore, her functioning in routine tasks such as self-care or baby care. Postpartum depression can range from moderate to severe and can occur shortly after delivery or up to a year later.

Symptoms

They usually appear during the first 3 months after delivery, but may begin earlier, during pregnancy, or later. Symptoms of postpartum depression may include the following:

- Persistent feelings of emptiness, sadness, anxiety, guilt, hopelessness, helplessness, worthlessness, shame, or inadequacy.
- Mood swings such as irritability, excessive crying, and intense anger.
- Restlessness, anxiety or experiencing panic attacks.
- Difficulty relating with the baby.
- Stay away from family and friends.
- Loss of appetite or eating more than usual.
- Difficulty sleeping (insomnia) or sleeping too much.
- Overwhelming fatigue or loss of energy.
- Loss of interest and pleasure in activities you used to enjoy.
- Decreased ability to think clearly, concentrate, or make decisions.
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide.

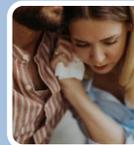


Causes

There is no single cause for postpartum depression. Physical, social, and emotional aspects can contribute to mood deterioration.



Physical changes - After childbirth, the dramatic decrease in the levels of hormones such as estrogen and progesterone in the body can contribute to postpartum depression.



Social and emotional demands - Little rest, multiple tasks, and the process of adjusting to caring for a baby can cause you to feel overwhelmed and make it difficult to handle even minor situations.

Risk factor's

These can manifest themselves after the birth of any of your children. However, the risk increases if you meet any of these characteristics:

- You have a history of depression, in pregnancy or at other times.
- You have bipolar disorder.
- Family history of depression.
- You have trouble breastfeeding.
- If the baby has health problems or any special needs.

What is Postpartum Psychosis?

Postpartum psychosis is a rare disorder that usually develops within the first week after delivery. Under postpartum psychosis, sudden mood swings can occur in a few minutes and symptoms such as:

- Delusions: beliefs or thoughts that are not true.
- Hallucinations: seeing, hearing, or smelling things that are not there.
- Manias: high and euphoric state of mind that includes strange behaviors detached from reality.
- Paranoia: thinking that other people want to hurt you.
- Confusion, restlessness, or agitation.
- Trying to hurt yourself or the baby.
- Obsessive thoughts about the baby.
- Excess energy and agitation.

Women who have postpartum psychosis may be at risk of harming themselves or their baby. For this reason, it is classified as an emergency, and you must receive immediate medical attention.

Treatment

In general, postpartum depression is treated with psychotherapy, support groups, medication, or a combination of several. Through psychotherapy, you can find alternatives to face your feelings, set realistic goals and manage daily life situations. On the other hand, the doctor may recommend antidepressant medications. Most of these can be used while breastfeeding with a little risk of side effects for the baby. If you have a history of depression, see your doctor and if you are planning to become pregnant or as soon as you find out that you are pregnant.



Remember

Postpartum depression is not your fault, it is a common illness that requires treatment and can affect any mother, regardless of age, race, income, culture, or education. For this reason, if you experience the symptoms, contact your doctor immediately. The sooner you get help, the sooner you'll have the tools you need to move beyond depression and enjoy your new baby.



Social and Emotional Aspect

For recommendations, tools, and resources on how you and your family can manage any emotional or physical concerns that may arise during pregnancy, contact your primary doctor, or call the following telephone lines:

Medical Advice Line

1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804

APS Healthcare

787-641-9133

References:

- (2022)<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es-es/diseases-conditions/postpartum-depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20376617#:~:text=S%C3%ADntomas%20de%20depresi%C3%B3n%20posparto&text=Estado%20de%20%C3%A1nimo%20deprimido%20o,Aislarse%20de%20familiares%20y%20amigos>
- (2022)<https://middlesexhealth.org/learning-center/espanol/enfermedades-y-afecciones/depresi-n-posparto>
- (2022)<https://www.cigna.com/es-us/knowledge-center/postpartum-blues-vs-depression>

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