

## Risk Factors for Postpartum Depression

Some women are at greater risk than others for postpartum depression if they have had the following:

- Postpartum depression after an earlier pregnancy.
- A personal history or a family history of depression, anxiety, or mental illness.
- A past pregnancy loss, such as a miscarriage or stillbirth.
- Depression during pregnancy.

## How Do These Conditions Affect the Baby?

A woman who is depressed:

- May have difficulty responding to her baby's needs.
- May have trouble bonding, or "falling in love" with her baby.
- May not have the energy to talk, sing, and play with her baby.



It is very important to be aware of the signs of depression and to get treatment as soon as possible.

The Association of Perinatal Networks of New York is an informal organization of the original and currently funded Comprehensive Prenatal Perinatal Services Networks. The intent in forming the Association was to broaden awareness of the continuing need to address and improve maternal and child health services and outcomes in New York State, and to broaden awareness of the improvement in perinatal health that have been evidenced in the regions of the state covered by Perinatal Networks.

### RESOURCES

#### Postpartum Resource Center of New York, Inc

109 Udall Road  
West Islip, NY 11795  
(631) 422-2255  
postpartum@aol.com  
[www.postpartumNY.org](http://www.postpartumNY.org)

A non-profit organization offering emotional support, educational pamphlets, and healthcare and support group referrals.

#### Depression After Delivery, Inc. (DAD)

91 E. Somerset Street  
Raritan, NJ 08869  
1-800-944-4PPD (4773)  
<http://www.depressionafterdelivery.com>

When you call DAD's information request line, you can leave your name and address on an answering machine. The DAD staff will send you information on pregnancy and postpartum disorders, a professional referral list, a list of volunteer telephone contacts and support groups.

#### Postpartum Support International

927 North Kellogg Avenue  
Santa Barbara, CA 93111  
1-805-967-7636  
[PSIOffice@earthlink.net](mailto:PSIOffice@earthlink.net)  
<http://www.postpartum.net>

When you call PSI, a volunteer listens to the reason for the call, and then offers information, education and a referral as needed. When possible, volunteers make referrals to contacts in the caller's own community. The only information mailed is a membership brochure and bibliography of printed material and videos on postpartum mood disorders.

Concept and original brochure, "More Than Just the Blues" developed by Ruth Hoffman Hein and Diane Hurley. This publication was produced in part, under a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau. The information presented does not necessarily reflect the official views of the Federal Government or the Department of Health and Human Services.



# "more than just the blues..."

PERINATAL MOOD DISORDER:  
ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT

Are you a mom, with a new baby, who is feeling...

- Sad most of the time?
- Angry?
- Guilty?
- Nervous?
- Alone?

Do you tend to....

- Cry for no reason?
- Feel "panic"?
- Worry a lot about your health or the health of your baby?
- Have trouble sleeping or relaxing?
- Stay away from other people?
- Have a change in appetite?
- Have difficulty making decisions?

The Association of Perinatal Networks of New York  
457 State Street Binghamton, NY 13901  
1-800-231-0744  
[info@associationofperinatalnetworks.org](mailto:info@associationofperinatalnetworks.org)

*If you have some of these feelings or behaviors, you may be depressed, even though other people may not see your depression.*

*Depression is common after pregnancy and birth, but can also happen during pregnancy.*

*Women wonder how they could feel sad when they think they should be happy about being a mother. This can be a confusing time.*

*Depression can be treated.*

*There is no need to keep suffering. There is help. Read the following, decide which best fits you, then take action.*

Let your health care provider know if the blues last more than two weeks.

## ***Baby Blues***

The “baby blues” are very common, starting suddenly on the third or fourth day after birth. About 50-80% of new mothers cry and feel overwhelmed, crabby, restless, and anxious. Some women have lots of ups and downs, like a roller coaster. “Baby blues” are unpleasant but they usually go away on their own in less than two weeks. Take good care of yourself. Ask for and accept help from others.



## ***Postpartum Depression***

About one in 10 new mothers feels depressed for more than a couple of weeks. Postpartum depression is a temporary illness that can be treated with therapy, medication, and caring support. The depression may begin soon after birth or anytime in the year after delivery.

### **Women with postpartum depression may:**

- Feel very tired.
- Be unable to sleep when they want.
- Feel that things are not right.
- Feel hopeless.
- Cry.
- Be confused about how they could feel this way with a new baby.
- Think about harming themselves or their babies.
- Have trouble taking care of their babies.
- Not feel close to their babies.
- Not be interested in having sex.



Some of these feelings can be caused by physical conditions. Let your health care provider know when you feel this way.

## ***Postpartum Psychosis***

This serious mental illness affects approximately 1 in 500-1,000 new mothers. It usually begins within the first three months after delivery. Women may experience hallucinations, delusions, insomnia, agitation, and bizarre feelings and behavior.

### ***What to do for “more than just the blues”***

In addition to getting professional help from a health care provider who knows about treating postpartum depression and other disorders, here are some tips that may help:

- Be kind to yourself – eat right, sleep, rest when the baby naps, and exercise.
- Ask for and accept help from others.
- Express your feelings, both positive and negative. It’s OK to cry.
- Talk to a supportive person.
- Do something “just for you” every day.
- Take a break from the baby. Let someone else care for the baby for a while.
- Set realistic expectations. Baby care takes a lot of time.
- Plan your day to get a feeling of control over your life.
- Look for humor. Have fun and a good laugh.
- Try not to make any major life changes until you are used to your new life.



Postpartum psychosis is a medical emergency. Women need immediate medical assistance.