

Postpartum Depression – Quick Facts

What is Postpartum Depression (PPD)?

Although having a baby can be one of the happiest times in our lives, as many as 80% of women experience a mood disturbance after having a child and between 10 - 20% of women develop a depression called Postpartum Depression. Signs include feeling sad and depressed, inadequate, fatigued, tearful, trouble sleeping, difficulty concentrating, unable to enjoy life, overwhelmed, very anxious and sometimes suicidal thoughts. Also, some mothers with PPD have intrusive negative thoughts about their baby and fears about harming their child (though most women do not act on these thoughts).

What are the risk factors for developing PPD?

Any woman can have a Postpartum Depression after having a baby but there are certain factors that can place you more at risk. These include having a previous history of depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder, a family history of depression, psychosocial stress, little social support, problems in your relationship with your partner, and a history of depression while pregnant or a history of PPD after a previous pregnancy or miscarriage.

What causes PPD?

There is no one known cause of PPD but there are several contributing factors. These include the above mentioned risk factors as well as hormonal changes after giving birth (and during pregnancy), thyroid problems, untreated pain in the perineal area and after a cesarean delivery, and fatigue.

How do I know if I have PPD?

If you have any of the above symptoms, or if close friends and loved ones notice a change in your mood, you might have PPD.

What should I do if I am worried that I have a Postpartum Depression?

You have a number of options. You can see a Mental Health Clinician, speak to your ObGyn, your general practitioner, or your pediatrician.

What kind of treatment is there for PPD?

Psychotherapy and group therapy can be very effective in helping you through this difficult time by providing you with coping techniques and support. Medication, in conjunction with therapy, can also be very helpful for some mothers.