

Maternal Mental Health: What every new mom and mom-to-be needs to know

Many women experience depression and anxiety during pregnancy and after having a baby.

Symptoms

Feelings of depression after pregnancy, also known as baby blues, are common, last about two weeks and are considered normal. Symptoms can also occur during pregnancy or any time during your baby's first year.

But if your symptoms last longer than two weeks, are severe or get worse, please talk with someone you trust and see your health care provider.

- Anxiety and/or nervousness
- Sadness
- Excessive crying
- Mood swings
- Difficulty concentrating
- Lack of interest in things you typically enjoy
- Changes in sleeping or eating habits
- Excessive worry about your baby
- Feelings of guilt or inadequacy
- Difficulty accepting motherhood

See your doctor right away if you have:

- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
- Panic attacks
- Fear that you can't take care of your baby
- Baby blues lasting longer than two weeks
- Irrational thinking, such as seeing or hearing things that are not there

You are not alone

One in five California women has symptoms of depression during or after pregnancy. More Black and Latina women are affected, as well as women who don't have support from family and friends. It's important to know this can happen to any woman regardless of age, income, culture or education.

Treatment is good for mom, baby and the entire family

Depression during pregnancy can cause problems, like premature birth. Depression after baby is born can result in breastfeeding problems and the inability for mothers to bond with their infants. Depression at any time during pregnancy or baby's first year can cause marital issues and can also affect mom-baby-family bonding, which can increase the risk of long-term mental and emotional problems in children.

Most women experience full recovery if they get treatment

More and more health care providers are screening for depression as part of your prenatal and postpartum care. However, do not wait for screening if you are experiencing symptoms beyond normal baby blues. The sooner you get treatment, the better.

Help is available

Asking for help is a sign of strength. If you're having any symptoms, now is the time to reach out to a trusted professional who can guide you through treatment. Talk to your family and friends for support. Remember, you did nothing to cause this, and there is no shame in asking for help—for your well-being and the health of your baby. For more information and maternal mental health resources, visit: www.cdph.ca.gov/MaternalMentalHealth

Need help right now?

Call **1-800-944-4773** or text **503-894-9453**, **Postpartum Support International** to find local resources.