

Depression During and After Pregnancy

Moms and moms-to-be deserve the best, including the very best mental health. Depression during and after pregnancy is common and treatable. If you think you have depression, seek treatment from your health care provider as soon as possible.

Depression causes severe symptoms that affect daily life

Everyone feels sad sometimes, but these feelings normally pass within a few days. Depression is a serious mood disorder that may last for weeks or months at a time.

Depression doesn't feel the same for everyone. Some people may experience a few symptoms, and others might experience many. How often symptoms occur, how long they last, and how intense they may feel can be different for each person.

Depression symptoms:

- Having a lasting sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Feelings of irritability or restlessness
- Loss of energy
- Problems concentrating, recalling details, and making decisions
- Difficulty falling asleep or sleeping too much
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts
- Aches or pains that do not get better with treatment

If you think you have depression, seek treatment from your health care provider as soon as possible.

Postpartum depression is different from the baby blues

Postpartum depression is depression that occurs after having a baby. Feelings of postpartum depression are more intense and last longer than those of “baby blues,” a term used to describe the worry, sadness, and tiredness many women experience after having a baby.

Symptoms of postpartum depression

The symptoms of postpartum depression are similar to symptoms of depression, but may also include:

- Crying more often than usual
- Feelings of anger
- Withdrawing from loved ones
- Feeling distant from your baby
- Worrying or feeling overly anxious
- Thinking about hurting yourself or your baby

Adapted from “Depression During and After Pregnancy” by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2019.

- Doubting your ability to care for your baby

Depression during and after pregnancy is common and treatable

CDC research shows that about 1 in 8 women experience symptoms of postpartum depression.

Having a baby is challenging and every woman deserves support. If you are experiencing emotional changes or think that you may be depressed, make an appointment to talk to your health care provider as soon as possible.

Most people get better with treatment and getting help is the best thing you can do for you and your baby. The first step to treatment is talking to your health care provider. After your visit, make sure to follow-up on all referrals and treatment that he or she suggests.

When discussing medications with your provider, let her or him know if you are pregnant, thinking about becoming pregnant, or breastfeeding. You and your provider can decide if taking medicine while pregnant or breastfeeding is right for you.

For Immediate Help

If the situation is potentially life-threatening, call 911.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** for free and confidential crisis counseling available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY: 1-800-799-4889. Online chat is also available 24/7.