



# Postpartum Depression

## Definition

Many moms experience “baby blues” after childbirth, which usually include mood swings, anxiety, crying spells and difficulty sleeping. Baby blues typically begins within the first days after delivery, and may last up to two weeks. But if your feelings of sadness or despair are so powerful that they prevent you from being able to do your daily tasks or care for your baby you could have postpartum depression. One in seven new moms can get postpartum depression.

## Symptoms

You could have postpartum depression if you experience five or more of the following symptoms almost every day, for most of the day, for at least two consecutive weeks.

- Feeling extreme sadness, emptiness, or hopelessness for the biggest part of the day for several weeks or more.
- Excessive crying spells.
- A loss of interest in activities or hobbies.

- Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- Feeling tired most of the day.
- Having feelings of anxiety, worry, panic attacks or racing thoughts.
- Overwhelming feelings of worthlessness or overpowering guilt.
- Having difficulty bonding with your baby.
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions.
- Restlessness or sluggishness.
- Withdrawing from family and friends.
- Feeling that life isn't worth living.
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby.
- Intense irritability and anger.
- Feeling so exhausted that you're unable to get out of bed for hours.

Untreated, postpartum depression may last for months or longer.

**“BAD MOMENTS DON'T MAKE BAD MAMAS”**  
**(LYSA TERKEUST)**

## Risk factors

The strongest predictors' of postpartum depression are:

- You have a history of depression, either during pregnancy or before.
- A family history of depression or mental illness.
- A traumatic life event during pregnancy or soon after childbirth.
- Trouble during childbirth, issues with the baby's health or birth defects.
- Lack of social support system.
- Baby blues after the delivery.
- Multiple babies.
- Unplanned or unwanted pregnancy.
- Experiencing domestic violence.
- Being unemployed.
- Pre-gestational or gestational diabetes.
- You have relationship problems with your partner.
- You have difficulty breast-feeding.

## Treatment

The good news is that postpartum depression is treatable.

If your symptoms are severe your medical provider may recommend counselling, antidepressants or both. You will start feeling better after 3-4 weeks on treatment. Selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are considered the safest option for breastfeeding women with depression.

Treatment keeps you from slipping into a deep depression that is harder to recover from and makes you feel better. Feeling better means you can bond more easily with your baby and take better care of her/him.

## To cope with postpartum depression

- Be gentle with yourself.
- Take things one at a time.
- Ask for support.
- Share your feelings.
- Spoil yourself.
- Grab some rest.
- Slow down on other responsibilities.
- Venture outdoors.
- Get some exercise.



*John 16:21 "A woman in labour is in pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish in her joy that a child has been born into the world." (REB)*

## References

[https://www.babycenter.com/o\\_postpartum-depression\\_227.bc](https://www.babycenter.com/o_postpartum-depression_227.bc)

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