

Symptoms of Postpartum Depression

- Loss of identity
- Complete loss of control
- Feeling withdrawn, isolated and lonely
- Change in appetite (undereating or overeating)
- Overwhelming exhaustion, yet unable to sleep
- Feelings of hopelessness, a sense of failure
- Mood swings
- Incapacitating anxiety or doubt
- Overly concerned about cleanliness/germs
- The need to keep moving or pacing
- Feeling the need to “jump out of your skin”
- Uncontrollable crying
- Thoughts of hurting your baby or yourself
- Nightmares
- Difficulty focusing or concentrating

These feelings and experiences may lead you to become possessive of your baby or to disengage from and avoid your baby. This poses a risk to the physical and emotional safety of your baby. If untreated, these symptoms can last up to one year. There are several treatment options including, psychotherapy, medication and/or support groups. Mothers who receive treatment usually respond extremely well.



Finding Help

When you or someone you know shows signs of postpartum mood disorder and obtains 15 or more points on the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale, it is important to seek professional help. There is no need to feel ashamed or suffer in silence. Your mood, if untreated, can negatively affect your functioning and your baby's development.

As a new mother, you need support so that you can believe in yourself and become a “good enough” mother. Your spouse, extended family, friends and any hired help can all serve to support you. Connecting with other mothers will also be very beneficial.

Resources

While you are still in the hospital (or if your baby stays in the hospital after you go home), ask your doctor or nurse (or your baby's doctor or nurse) to order a Behavioral Health Services consultation.

Outpatient Behavioral Health Services

For comprehensive mental health services contact, **404-851-8960** or **Behavioral.HealthServices@northside.com**

After both you and your baby have gone home: Contact your doctor or health care provider and ask about having your thyroid function checked. You should also obtain a referral to a mental health professional who works with postpartum adjustment challenges.

HELP

Additional Resources

Georgia Crisis Line:
For 24/7 mental health emergencies
call 1-800-715-4225

Project Healthy Moms:
Call 678-904-1966 or 1-800-933-9896
mhaggeorgia.org

Postpartum Support International:
Call 1-800-944-4PPD (4473) or postpartum.net

Postpartum Progress:
Visit postpartumprogress.com
northside.com/behavioralhealth

NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

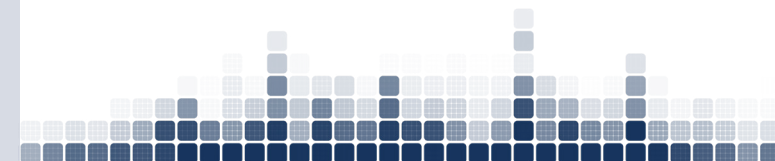
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NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES



YOUR EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING AFTER BABY ARRIVES



Along with the joy and relief of giving birth to a baby, many mothers experience some kind of let down. This may range from postpartum blues to clinical depression to psychotic depression. The difference lies in the nature and intensity of these feelings as well as how long they last. Studies have shown that women are more likely to develop these problems following delivery of a baby than at any other time in their lives.



Postpartum Blues

Many mothers may doubt themselves and their ability to be a good mother and take care of their new baby. They may wonder what is wrong; be tearful or easily irritated; anxious or ultra sensitive. They may be exhausted, have trouble concentrating or sleeping and may feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities. Such feelings occur in almost all women who have delivered a baby (89%), whether this is their first or they have other children at home. The "blues" usually begin around the third or fourth day after delivery and can last from a few hours to a week. Such feelings usually fade without treatment.

Postpartum Clinical Depression

When the "blues" continue beyond two weeks and worsen, postpartum depression is probably developing. This is not uncommon and happens to 10-20% of post-partum women. Postpartum depressive symptoms can appear any time during the first few months to one year after delivery.

Postpartum Psychosis

This reaction is rare (found in only 0.1% of new mothers) and involves a major disturbance in how the mother views reality.

Symptoms include:

- Extreme confusion
- Refusal to eat
- Delusions
- Auditory hallucinations
- Agitation
- Rapid or nonsense speech

These signs usually start within 3 to 14 days after delivery. The mother's ability to care for her baby is greatly impaired, placing the infant at serious risk. Immediate medical attention is necessary involving anti-psychotic medication, usually as an inpatient at a hospital.

Risk Factors for Postpartum Reactions

Factors that increase a mother's risk:

- Pregnancy was unwanted or unplanned
- Hormonal changes following delivery
- Sleep deprivation
- Lack of support from family and friends
- Financial problems
- Conflict and tension in relationship with adult partner
- Stressful life events during pregnancy, delivery or postpartum periods
- Medical complications during pregnancy (e.g. prolonged bedrest) or delivery
- Fertility problems prior to pregnancy
- History or family history of depression, bipolar mood disorder or postpartum "blues" with prior delivery
- History of extreme premenstrual mood changes
- Prior loss of a baby or recent loss of a loved one
- Fussy or difficult baby who is not easily soothed
- Baby with feeding difficulties and/or health problems
- Premature baby
- Unrealistic expectations about mothering
- Striving to be perfect
- Sense of identity defined by professional work

Assessing Your Risk

The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) has been used all over the world to evaluate a woman's chance of developing a mood disorder after giving birth. Circle the following items that best describe your situation to determine if you are having problems adjusting to being a new mother and are experiencing symptoms that may warrant the need to seek help. Please mark the answer that comes closest to how you have felt overall during the past seven days, not just how you feel today. *Remember- Use this scale only after your baby is at least seven days old.

In the past seven days:

1. I have been able to laugh and see the funny side of things:

a. As much as I ever did	c. Definitely not so much now
b. Not quite so much now	d. Not at all
2. I have looked forward with enjoyment to things:

a. As much as I ever did	c. Definitely less than I used to
b. Rather less than I used to	d. Hardly at all
3. I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong:

a. No, never	c. Yes, sometimes
b. Not very often	d. Yes, very often

4. I have felt worried and anxious without a very good reason:

a. No, not at all	c. Yes, sometimes
b. Hardly ever	d. Yes, quite a lot
5. I have felt scared or panicky without a good reason:

a. No, not at all	c. Yes, sometimes
b. No, not much	d. Yes, quite a lot
6. I have been feeling overwhelmed:

a. No, I have been coping as well as ever	c. Yes, sometimes I haven't been coping well
b. No, usually I have coped quite well	d. Yes, I haven't been able to cope at all
7. I have had difficulty sleeping even when the baby is asleep:

a. No, not at all	c. Yes, sometimes
b. Not very often	d. Yes, most of the time
8. I have felt sad or miserable:

a. No, not at all	c. Yes, quite often
b. Not very often	d. Yes, most of the time
9. I have been crying or fighting to keep from crying:

a. No, never	c. Yes, quite often
b. Only occasionally	d. Most of the time
10. The thought of harming myself or my baby has occurred to me:

a. Never	c. Sometimes
b. Hardly ever	d. Yes, quite often

Scoring

Number of times "a" circled _____ x 0 = _____
 Number of times "b" circled _____ x 1 = _____
 Number of times "c" circled _____ x 2 = _____
 Number of times "d" circled _____ x 3 = _____
 Your Score = _____

What Your Total Score Means

- 0 - 8 =** low chance of developing a mood disorder
- 8 - 12 =** still adjusting to life with a new baby
- 13 - 14 =** probably have postpartum "blues"
- 15 or higher =** high chance of experiencing clinical postpartum depression; seek professional help