



## Understanding Postpartum Depression

The birth of a baby can bring a whirlwind of emotions. Parents often feel a mix of excitement, joy, even fear and anxiety. However, one emotion you may not expect after childbirth is depression. This article provides essential information to help you navigate the challenges of postpartum depression and find the support you may need.

### What is Postpartum Depression?

Postpartum depression is a major form of depression. Roughly 10-20% of new parents experience PPD. PPD includes all symptoms of depression however it only occurs post childbirth. It can begin any time after delivery and last up to a year.

### What contributes to Postpartum Depression?

- **Hormonal Changes** - After childbirth, rapid fluctuations in hormone levels, such as estrogen & progesterone, can trigger a depressive episode. These hormones help regulate mood and anxiety.
- **Life Stressors** - Death of a loved one, relationship issues, financial hardship, workplace stress, loneliness & poor self image can contribute to PPD symptoms.
- **Societal Factors** - Certain group, including under age 24, multiracial and ingenious communities, trauma survivors, and lower income households are more likely to experience PPD.

### What are the symptoms Postpartum Depression?

- Depressed mood or sever mood swings
- Excessive Crying
- Difficulty Bonding with Baby
- Withdrawal from family & friends
- Overwhelming tiredness or loss of energy

### What is Postpartum Psychosis?

A rare condition that usually develops within the first week after delivery and the symptoms are sever. Symptoms include:

- Confusion and disorientation
- Obsessive thoughts about your baby
- Hallucinations and delusions
- Thoughts or attempts to harm yourself or your baby

### Available Treatments for Postpartum Depression

The good news is that there are several effective treatment options. It's important to work with your medical provider to find the best approach for you.

**Psychotherapy** - It may be helpful to talk through your concerns with a psychiatrist, psychologist, or mental health professional.

**Antidepressant Medication** - Your healthcare provider may recommend an antidepressant. Most antidepressants can be used during breastfeeding with little risk of side effects for baby.

**Fast-Acting Treatments** - When needed, other medicines may be added to your treatment such as antianxiety medicine.

### When to see a doctor?

If you're feeling depressed after your baby's birth, don't be embarrassed to admit it. If you experience any symptoms of postpartum depression, call your primary health care provider and schedule an appointment. If you have symptoms that suggest you may have postpartum psychosis, get help immediately. The condition requires urgent attention.

**BHS provides referrals to qualified mental health professionals that can help. Call BHS at 800-245-1150 to speak to your designated Care Coordinator about your benefits and options for support.**



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