

Know the signs of postpartum depression

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(HealthDay)—Having a baby is a unique joy, yet it can also bring profound sadness to some women.

In fact, about 13 percent of [new mothers](#) will experience a [major depressive episode](#) during their baby's first year.

Postpartum depression, or PPD, affects baby as well as mom because it can keep you from taking care of your newborn and being in tune with your infant's needs. You're more likely to stop breast-feeding too soon and less likely to see to baby's well-being, like skipping pediatrician visits.

PPD can develop after any pregnancy, not just the first one. It's more likely among women who lack a support system, have financial problems or are under significant stress. Because of these predictors, it may be possible to take steps during pregnancy to prevent it or minimize symptoms, so share these concerns with your [health care provider](#).

Factors that put you at risk for [postpartum depression](#) include:

- Past episodes of depression.
- Past episodes of postpartum depression.
- Significant life stressors within the past year, such as health or job problems.
- Strained relationship with your spouse.
- Poor support system.
- Financial difficulties.
- Unplanned pregnancy.
- Bipolar disorder.

It's also important to know the difference between "baby blues" and postpartum depression so you can seek appropriate treatment after the baby arrives. The baby blues last from a few days up to two weeks with milder symptoms like changes in mood and trouble concentrating.

Signs of the [baby blues](#) include:

- Mood swings.
- Sadness and/or crying.
- Feeling anxious and irritable.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Difficulty sleeping.

Postpartum depression mood swings are severe and persistent—you may withdraw from everyone around you and fail to bond with your baby.

Signs of postpartum depression include:

- Severe change in appetite.
- Extreme fatigue yet not sleeping.
- Severe mood swings, including feeling irritable, angry and sad, but no joy.
- No interest in pleasurable activities.
- Low self-worth.
- Withdrawing from loved ones, including baby, along with feelings of guilt or shame.
- Having thoughts about hurting yourself or your baby.

Don't assume depression will go away on its own. Counseling and medication can help right away, so don't delay in reaching out.

More information: Learn more about [postpartum depression](#) at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

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