

Why you should ask to be screened for postpartum depression

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It's not uncommon for new moms to feel an emotional letdown shortly

after baby is born. Though symptoms of these so-called "baby blues" can be wide-ranging, they last no more than two weeks and go away on their own.

Some Signs of the Baby Blues:

- Mood swings
- Feeling sad or overwhelmed
- Being unable to concentrate
- Appetite and sleep troubles

Women who have more [severe symptoms](#) that linger could be experiencing [postpartum depression](#), which needs treatment. It's not always easy to identify this in yourself. You might chalk up [negative feelings](#) to the demands of motherhood, like nighttime feedings, little sleep and a low energy level. Some women ignore these symptoms because they feel guilty for feeling bad.

This form of depression is prevalent enough that in 2016 the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) suggested that every new mom be screened with a simple questionnaire to uncover depression early on.

There's science behind this wellness step, including a study done in the Netherlands that found that moms assessed for depression at well-baby visits had better mental health in the long run. A February 2019 USPSTF recommendation added that women who are known to be at increased risk for postpartum depression should be offered counseling to help prevent it.

Some Signs of Postpartum Depression:

- Severe mood swings and anxiety
- Not bonding with baby
- Withdrawing from loved ones and favorite activities
- Severe appetite and sleep troubles
- Feelings of despair, self-harm or hurting baby

If you're experiencing deep sadness and having a hard time bonding with your baby, and your doctor hasn't yet asked you about your emotional state, talk to him or her about your feelings. Ask about getting screened and, if needed, treated for postpartum depression. Untreated, it may last for many months or longer.

More information: You can access a [postpartum depression questionnaire](#) online to help you put your feelings into words to share with your health team.

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