

Postpartum Depression

What is postpartum depression(PPD):

PPD is considered an illness much like high blood pressure, heart disease, or diabetes, and can be treated with on-going support, therapeutic intervention and medications.

PPD symptoms include:

- loss of appetite, possible weight loss or gain
- low energy or lack of motivation
- loss of interest or pleasure
- disrupted sleep, poor sleep, or increased sleep
- crying or tearfulness
- irritability and/or anxiety
- thoughts of hurting yourself, or suicide
- worry or thoughts about hurting your baby

Factors that increase the risk for PPD:

- hx. Of non-pregnancy related depression
- previous PPD
- severe pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS)
- difficult or stressful marriage, or stressful events during pregnancy
- limited available family or support network

Options for help:

- locating a support person to talk to(family, relative, or friend)
- use of support network to assist with childcare, household chores, etc., allowing for sometime for yourself
- setting realistic expectations for yourself- don't get overwhelmed, as parenting is challenging and may prevent you from accomplishing normal day-to-day tasks that were previously easy
- find, and get involved in, a support group, often offered by local hospital, human service/parent support agency, or mental health center
- strongly consider counseling with a therapist along with exploring medication if needed

Suggestions for fathers/partners:

- attend as many OBGYN/MD appointments with mom as possible, before and after birth
- ask questions of healthcare staff and others
- support her- believe her, don't assume she is overreacting
- be her lifeline(you may have to be the one to initiate support or treatment exploration
- consider support and counseling for yourself as well

Most recognized screening tool:

Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale(included in packet and on link below)

<http://www.beyondtheblues.com/>

<http://www.postpartumexperience.com/>

<http://www.babybluesconnection.org/>

<http://www.postpartumstress.com/>

http://www.mchlibrary.info/KnowledgePaths/kp_postpartum.html

<http://www.postpartum.net/>

<http://www.depressionafterdelivery.com/Home.asp>

<http://www.fitpregnancy.com/yournewlife/191>

<http://familydoctor.org/379.xml>

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/faq/postpartum.htm>

<http://www.universalcare.com/pdf/postpartumdepressiontool.pdf> -screening tool