

Depression *after* Childbirth



Having a baby is an amazing and wonderful time. But for some moms, the joy is mixed with feelings of sadness. After childbirth, many moms experience mood swings and crying spells that last for a short time. But some new moms experience a more severe, long-lasting form of depression known as postpartum depression. This is the most common complication among women who have just had a baby. Postpartum depression makes it hard to function well, including caring for and bonding with the baby. However, with the right help, you can feel better.

Signs and Symptoms

According to Mayo Clinic, postpartum depression can begin any time during the first two months after giving birth.

Signs and symptoms may include:

- depressed mood, or severe mood swings
- excessive crying
- withdrawing from family and friends
- feelings of shame and guilt
- overwhelming fatigue or loss of energy
- difficulty bonding with your baby
- trouble sleeping
- extreme irritability and anger
- decreased ability to concentrate, think clearly or make decisions
- thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
- loss of appetite or eating much more than usual
- hopelessness
- fear that you're not a good mother
- severe anxiety and panic attacks
- recurring thoughts of death or suicide



If you are having trouble coping with motherhood, talk with your doctor.

Risk Factors

Postpartum depression can develop after the birth of any child, not just the first. No one knows for sure why some women get postpartum depression and others don't. Mayo Clinic states your risk increases if:

- you have a history of depression, either during pregnancy or at other times
- you have bipolar disorder
- you have experienced stressful events during the past year
- your baby has health problems or special needs
- you are having relationship problems
- you have a weak support system
- you have financial problems
- the pregnancy was unplanned or unwanted

Postpartum depression is a common medical condition that requires treatment. If you are having trouble coping with motherhood, talk with your doctor right away. He or she can determine if you are experiencing postpartum depression and refer you to a mental health professional, if necessary.