

How to identify and manage postpartum depression

Bringing home a new baby can be incredibly joyful, but it can also come with challenges. Sometimes during those postpartum days, happiness can be overshadowed by other emotions. It could be a fleeting case of the common “baby blues”—but about one in five new parents experience a more serious version called postpartum depression. Here’s what you need to know, and how to get the support you deserve if you’re struggling.



What are the symptoms of postpartum depression?

Symptoms of postpartum depression often occur a few days or weeks after delivery, but sometimes they set in up to a year later. **Symptoms can include:**

- Depressed mood
- Severe mood swings
- Loss of appetite
- Severe Anxiety
- Trouble bonding with the baby
- Panic attacks
- Lack of pleasure in things you used to enjoy
- Trouble concentrating or making decisions
- Suicidal thoughts or thoughts of harming others

For immediate help or if you have thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else:

- Dial 911 in an emergency
- Call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988 or use their chat feature online

The symptoms aren’t one-size-fits-all—so if anything feels off, it’s important to trust your instincts and seek support. If you’re going through any of the symptoms listed above, it’s worth checking in with your OB-GYN or scheduling time to meet with a mental health provider.

What should I do if I think I have postpartum depression?

First and foremost: Try to have as much compassion for yourself as possible. **Depression during this (or any other period in your life) is nothing to be ashamed of.** Second: Tell a healthcare professional, or friend or loved one who will step in to make sure you get help. Help could look like talking with your doctor and finding the right therapist for you. Some people are prescribed medication to help with their depression symptoms.

Many who have been through this struggle—and come out on the other side—say that feeling isolated and not talking about their problems made things harder. The sooner you let in the support, the sooner you’ll start to feel like yourself again.