



What you need to know about paternal postnatal depression

You've likely heard that [one in seven women](#) experience postpartum depression, but did you know that men can experience it too? It's true, and it's much more common than you might think. Experts estimate that paternal postnatal depression (PPND) affects as many as [one in four](#) new fathers in the first two months after their child is born. Read on to learn more about PPND and its risk factors, symptoms, and treatment options.



Know the risk factors

Postpartum depression and paternal postnatal depression can occur anytime in the [twelve months](#) after bringing a new baby into your life. PPND is caused by a combination of biological and environmental factors, including:

- Personal or family history of depression
- Problems in your relationship
- Your partner experiencing prenatal or postpartum depression
- Lack of confidence as a parent
- Lack of social support
- Lack of sleep
- Financial concerns

Recognize the common symptoms

Symptoms of paternal postnatal depression can look similar to the symptoms of postpartum depression in new birthing parents. If you're struggling with PPND, you may experience these symptoms:

- Intrusive thought patterns, like constantly worrying that your baby is too hot or too cold
- Mood swings or restlessness
- Unable to find joy in life
- Increased sadness and crying
- Unable to look forward to the future
- Changes in appetite or sleep

There are also some signs of depression more commonly seen in men, which can also apply to men experiencing postnatal mood disorders.

These include:

Escapist behavior, like spending more time than usual at work.

- Physical symptoms, like headaches or stomach issues
- Issues with alcohol or drug use
- Irritability
- Risky behavior, like driving recklessly
Controlling, violent, or abusive behavior

How to deal with the stigma of paternal postnatal depression

It might be tempting to dismiss your symptoms. We don't often encourage men to talk about their feelings and mental health—but that doesn't mean they don't need to. Mental health issues may challenge men's ideas about masculinity, deterring them from talking openly about their symptoms. More men experience shame or fear about talking about mental health than women. It may be difficult for you to admit that you need help, but treatment can alleviate your symptoms.



HERE ARE SOME STEPS TO COPE WITH PATERNAL APOSTNATAL DEPRESSION:

Seek treatment

The first step to getting better is recognizing that things aren't okay. The second step is bringing in an expert. Talk to a [mental healthcare professional](#) you can trust to get a diagnosis and discuss your treatment options. The good news is that [treatment](#) for paternal postnatal depression is very effective. Paternal postnatal depression can be treated with therapy, medication, or a combination of the two. Continue to stay in touch with your provider as your treatment progresses.

Don't self-isolate

Social withdrawal is a common symptom of depression. Our instinct may be to pull away from our friends and family when we're feeling down—even though that's not what's best for us. Create a list of people you'd like to talk to or reconnect with if you've been feeling isolated, and start scheduling activities or times to talk.

Don't equate yourself to your depression

It can be easy to ruminate on a diagnosis, but try to stay focused on the facts, your support system, and your treatment options. Even simple language changes can help you shift your mindset—rather than saying, “I'm depressed,” you can try saying, “I have depression,” or “I'm having depressive thoughts.” Your depression is a mental health condition, not a reflection of your worth as a person.