

The birth of a baby is a major life event and can trigger many different emotions from joy and excitement to fear and anxiety. Some normal changes in pregnancy and after can cause feelings similar to depression.

Post-partum Blues

Approximately 50 - 70% of women may experience depression for a short time after pregnancy. These are feelings of anxiety, irritation, and tearfulness that are often called "the post-partum blues." This generally occurs in the first few weeks after pregnancy and goes away soon, without the need for treatment.

Post-partum Depression

Post-partum depression is a more serious condition that affects between 8 - 20% of women after pregnancy, especially the first 4 weeks. It is necessary to seek medical attention to treat post-partum depression. Women may be at higher risk if they have one or more risk factors listed below:

- Had a mood disorder (depression or anxiety) prior to pregnancy or history of suicide attempt
- Have had depression with a previous pregnancy
- Have a family history of depression or anxiety
- Had a stressful pregnancy, including illness, death or illness of a loved one, a difficult or emergency delivery, premature delivery or illness or abnormality in the baby
- Have little support from family, friends, and/or a significant other
- Have financial problems (low income, poor housing)
- Are under age 20
- Have an unplanned or undesired pregnancy
- Currently abuse alcohol, take illegal substances, or smoke (these are also serious medical health risks for the baby)

Symptoms of postpartum depression:

Most of the symptoms are the same as in major depression and may include the following which can occur nearly every day. If you have any of the following symptoms of depression for more than two weeks, then please call us. We can figure out if your symptoms are caused by depression or something else.

- Negative feelings toward the baby, not wanting to be around the baby or thoughts of hurting the baby
- Feeling sad, hopeless or overwhelmed
- Feelings of restlessness or irritability, guilt or worthlessness
- Losing pleasure in all or most activities
- Decreased energy or motivation
- Decreased or increased appetite
- Crying a lot
- Feelings of isolation, or disconnected; withdrawing from family and friends
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much
- Thoughts of harming yourself, death or suicide

Call 911 or our office right away if you have thoughts of harming yourself or your baby!

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/FAQ/depression-pregnancy.cfm#b>