

Postpartum Depression

Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of depression after childbirth vary, and they can range from mild to severe.

Baby blues symptoms

Signs and symptoms of baby blues — which last only a few days to a week or two after your baby is born — may include:

- Mood swings
- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Irritability
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Crying
- Reduced concentration
- Appetite problems
- Trouble sleeping

Postpartum depression symptoms

Postpartum depression may be mistaken for baby blues at first — but the signs and symptoms are more intense and last longer, and may eventually interfere with your ability to care for your baby and handle other daily tasks. Symptoms usually develop within the first few weeks after giving birth, but may begin earlier — during pregnancy — or later — up to a year after birth.

Postpartum depression signs and symptoms may include:

- Depressed mood or severe mood swings
- Excessive crying
- Difficulty bonding with your baby
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Loss of appetite or eating much more than usual
- Inability to sleep (insomnia) or sleeping too much
- Overwhelming fatigue or loss of energy
- Reduced interest and pleasure in activities you used to enjoy
- Intense irritability and anger
- Fear that you're not a good mother
- Hopelessness
- Feelings of worthlessness, shame, guilt or inadequacy
- Diminished ability to think clearly, concentrate or make decisions
- Restlessness
- Severe anxiety and panic attacks
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide

Untreated, postpartum depression may last for many months or longer.

Postpartum psychosis

With postpartum psychosis — a rare condition that typically develops within the first week after delivery — the signs and symptoms are severe. Signs and symptoms may include:

- Confusion and disorientation
- Obsessive thoughts about your baby
- Hallucinations and delusions
- Sleep disturbances
- Excessive energy and agitation
- Paranoia
- Attempts to harm yourself or your baby

Postpartum psychosis may lead to life-threatening thoughts or behaviors and requires immediate treatment.

Postpartum depression in new fathers

New fathers can experience postpartum depression, too. They may feel sad or fatigued, be overwhelmed, experience anxiety, or have changes in their usual eating and sleeping patterns — the same symptoms mothers with postpartum depression experience.

Fathers who are young, have a history of depression, experience relationship problems or are struggling financially are most at risk of postpartum depression. Postpartum depression in fathers — sometimes called paternal postpartum depression — can have the same negative effect on partner relationships and child development as postpartum depression in mothers can.

If you're a new father and are experiencing symptoms of depression or anxiety during your partner's pregnancy or in the first year after your child's birth, talk to your health care professional. Similar treatments and supports provided to mothers with postpartum depression can be beneficial in treating postpartum depression in fathers.