



Postpartum Depression (PPD)

Types of postpartum mood disorders

Postpartum Mood Disorders encompass a wide range of conditions which differ in scope, symptoms, duration, and severity ranging from the well-known “baby or maternity blues” which affects an estimated 85% of women to the most severe form of PPD, postpartum psychosis which affects an estimated 0.1%-0.2% of women.

The “baby or maternity blues”

Typically begins on the third or fourth day after delivery and may include such symptoms as tearfulness, anxiety, irritability, insomnia, poor concentration, fearfulness, and emotional instability. This condition is often transient and disappears by about one to two weeks. For a few women however, the condition may last longer and “merge” into a more serious mood or anxiety disorder.

Postpartum depression (major depressive disorder with postpartum onset)

This condition is estimated to affect approximately 10-15% of women and often begins within 2 weeks to 6 months after delivery. In addition to some of the classic symptoms of depression or anxiety, women might also exhibit extreme irritability, panic attacks, obsessive-compulsive symptoms, and intrusive thoughts about harming the baby. This condition is more common in women who have previously experienced depression but many women experience first episodes after pregnancy. This condition responds well to treatment.

Postpartum psychosis

The most serious of the postpartum disorders, this illness affects only about 1-2 in 1000 new mothers. Onset is rapid, sudden, and very dramatic, often within days to weeks of delivery. It can be characterized by psychotic depression, mania, hallucinations (hearing or seeing things that other people cannot), delusions (fixed, false beliefs), extreme confusion and suicidal thoughts. It is a serious condition that demands rapid treatment for the safety of the mother and her baby. This condition is more common in women with bipolar disorder.

Symptoms

- Feeling restless or slowed down
- Feeling sad most of the day
- Loss of interest or pleasure in all or most things
- Chronic exhaustion which does not go away even with a good night's sleep
- Extreme irritability, frustration, or anger
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Trouble sleeping even when the baby is sleeping
- Loss of appetite or eating too much
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating or making decisions
- Crying for no reason
- No interest or pleasure in your baby
- Overwhelming feelings of guilt, worthlessness or inadequacy
- Scary thoughts about harming your baby
- Anxiety or panic attacks
- No desire to be with friends or family
- Excessive worrying about your baby's health
- Suicidal thoughts or frequent thoughts of death

If you are experiencing some of these symptoms, and they have lasted for more than two weeks, you may be suffering from a postpartum mood disorder and should seek prompt professional assessment.

Treatment options

There are a variety of very effective treatments for PPD including but not limited to the following:

- Psychotherapy (individual or family)
- Participation in postpartum support groups
i.e. OUR SISTERS' PLACE
- Antidepressant medications

The most important step to take is to become more knowledgeable about PPD and seek help. **REMEMBER... You can always talk to someone who's been there at Our Sisters' Place!**

Our Sisters' Place is a community-based support network for women, with a focus on mood disorders associated with hormonal changes throughout the lifespan. “Our Sisters' Place provides support, information and education as a complement to traditional and alternative therapies. OSP services are not intended as a replacement for other treatment options and encourages individuals to seek treatment by a qualified health care professional.”

Our Sisters' Place is a program of **Mood Disorders Association of Ontario (MDAO)**

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Fax: 416.486.8127 E-mail: info@oursistersplace.ca Website: www.oursistersplace.ca



Support groups for postpartum depression

Our Sisters' Place

Mood Disorders Association of Ontario
36 Eglinton Avenue West, Suite 602, Toronto, ON
Telephone: 416.486.7432
Toll-free: 1.866.363.MOOD (6663)

Maternal Support Programs

Women's Health Centre
St. Joseph's Health Centre, Toronto, ON
Telephone: 416.530.6850

Postpartum Support Group, London

Child Reach Resource Centre
265 Maitland Street, London
every Thursday morning
(group not available in July and August)
Telephone: 519.434.3644

Mothers Offering Mothers Support, Ottawa

Parent Resource Centre
Telephone: 613.565.2467 ext. 410

Recommended websites

Our Sisters' Place

Mood Disorders Association of Ontario
www.oursistersplace.ca

Postpartum Support International

(information for moms, their partners and link to chat room)
www.postpartum.net

Online Postpartum Depression Support Group

www.ppdsupportpage.com

Pacific Postpartum Support Society

www.postpartum.org

Postpartum Depression

www.psycom.net/depression.central.post-partum.html

Postpartum Directory – Ontario Directory

www.oursistersplace.ca/pdf/PPD-Directory.pdf

For partners...

Your Medical Source, Depression After Pregnancy

www.yourmedicalsource.com/library/depressionpregnancy/DPR_how.html

