

# Postpartum Depression

## What are Postpartum Depression and Postpartum Blues?

After having a baby, some women have symptoms of sadness or anxiety. This can occur within 1-3 days after delivery lasting about 1-2 weeks and resolve on its own (postpartum blues).

Other women experience strong feelings of sadness, anxiety, helplessness, or guilt that impair their ability to function in their daily lives. These symptoms usually start within 1-3 weeks of delivery but can start anytime up to a year after delivery. Sometimes postpartum blues linger and get worse, developing into **postpartum depression**. Below is a list of things for you and your friends and family to look for:

- Sadness
- Guilt (some examples include feeling as though you aren't doing a good enough job, that you have upset the balance of your life by having a baby, or aren't spending enough time with other important people in your life)
- Anxiety (this can be regarding one thing in particular or can be a generalized feeling of anxiety about everything)
- Helplessness or trouble making simple decisions
- Trouble sleeping, eating, taking care of yourself
- Intense concern or worry about the baby or lack of interest in the baby
- Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy
- Just not acting or feeling like yourself

**If you ever have thoughts about hurting yourself, the baby, or your other children, call your doctor, midwife, the Counseling Service of Addison County's 24 Hour Emergency Phone - 802- 388-7641, 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) immediately ([www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)). Remove yourself from the situation by moving to a separate room if possible, making sure that the baby is in a safe place (i.e. the crib).**

## What are some ways to help prevent Postpartum Depression?

- **SLEEP!** Try to sleep when the baby is sleeping. Take shifts with your partner if possible. Accept offers from friends and family to watch the baby so you can catch a nap. No one can cope with things as well when they are sleep deprived.
- **Acceptance!** Your life has changed dramatically. There are things that you used to be able to do (dishes, laundry, tidy house) that just have to be let go for the first few days to weeks. When someone asks how they can help, have them do those activities so that you can either bond with the baby or sleep. You WILL regain a sense of normalcy, but it takes a little while as everyone adjusts.

- Get Outside: Especially with winter babies, the tendency is to just stay in your pajamas all day. Take time to shower and dress each day. Go outside for a walk with the baby (bundled up, of course). Meet friends for coffee or go to the library. Being together with other new moms is especially helpful.
- GET HELP EARLY! Women often tend to push the symptoms of postpartum depression down, not acknowledging them because they feel they shouldn't be feeling this way. This isn't true. You feel what you feel, and there is no shame in that. The longer you ignore the symptoms, the harder it is to dig yourself out. If you are struggling, even a little, call your doctor. Often, women find talking to their loved ones helpful, while other women need someone impartial, like a therapist, with whom to talk. Sometimes women need medication to help them, but this is not the first line of defense.

**Websites that might be helpful:**

- <http://postpartumprogress.com/>
- <http://www.postpartum.net/>
- <http://www.acog.org/-/media/For%20Patients/faq091.ashx>
- [http://www.uptodate.com/contents/patient-information-postpartum-depression-the-basics?source=search\\_result&search=Postpartum+Depression&selectedTitle=4%7E28](http://www.uptodate.com/contents/patient-information-postpartum-depression-the-basics?source=search_result&search=Postpartum+Depression&selectedTitle=4%7E28)
- <https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/depression-during-and-after-pregnancy>

REMEMBER:

THIS WILL NOT LAST FOREVER.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

YOU CANNOT FIX WHAT YOU DON'T ACKNOWLEDGE