

REPRODUCTIVE MOOD DISORDERS

Pregnancy and the postpartum period are both joyful and exhausting times for many women. Often accompanying this time are common feelings of fatigue, low energy, irritability, difficulty with sleep, strong emotional reactions, worry, hormonal and body changes.

**While these symptoms are often a common experience of pregnancy and the postpartum period, they may also be a sign of depression or anxiety if they persist for more than a few weeks and interfere with daily functioning.*

Baby Blues

After childbirth, a significant drop in hormones occurs (estrogen and progesterone), contributing to short-term mood changes. Additionally, hormones produced by your thyroid gland may decline sharply and may leave you feeling tired and sluggish. These symptoms may occur a few days up to 3 weeks postpartum. 50-85% of women experience these symptoms, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

Symptoms may include mood swings, anxiety, sadness, irritability, feeling overwhelmed, tearfulness and crying, reduced concentration, appetite changes, and difficulty sleeping.



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- 1 Postpartum Depression:** A period of more than two weeks of symptoms occurring 4-8 weeks postpartum up to one year. Found in 10-15% of births according to UNC Center for Women's Mood Disorders and The American Psychological Association.

 - Symptoms may include sadness or frequent crying, intense anxiety, obsessions and ruminations, sleep disturbance, reduced concentration and appetite changes, suicidal thoughts, intense worry about baby's health, loss of interest in an enjoyable activity, irritability, reduced self-worth/confidence.

- 2 Postpartum Anxiety:** Can include Panic Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, and Generalized Anxiety Disorder, as well as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

 - Panic attacks: Sudden and intense rush of anxiety. Avoidance of places/activities where panic has occurred.
 - Compulsions: Repetitive behavior related to fear of something bad happening (i.e., checking baby's breathing, washing hands, checking blood pressure.)
 - Worry: Thoughts that feel uncontrollable and severe. Physical symptoms accompanying thoughts (i.e., headache, stomach ache, fatigue.)
 - Obsessions: Intrusive thoughts, images, or impulses that cause distress. May be related to health or baby, harming baby, sexual in nature.
 - Post-traumatic stress: Intrusive images or thoughts related to past trauma. Avoidance of reminders of trauma (people, places, things). Hyper-vigilance, feeling on edge, irritable.

- 3 Postpartum Psychosis:** Rare disorder, occurring in approximately 1 to 2 out of every 1,000 deliveries. Signs are typically seen within the first few weeks after delivery with more severity in symptoms.

 - Symptoms may include obsessive thoughts about the baby, hallucinations and delusions, severe sleep disturbance, feelings of paranoia, or attempts to harm self or baby. These symptoms often require immediate attention and can be a symptom of a severe mood disorder or Bipolar Disorder.

- 4 Bipolar Disorder, Peripartum Onset:** Periods of severely depressed mood and irritability and/or a rapid change in mood cycles.

 - Symptoms may include rapid speech, anxiety, irritability, little need for sleep, racing thoughts, trouble concentrating, continuous high energy, overconfidence, impulsiveness, poor judgment, distractability, grandiose thoughts, and inflated sense of self-importance, and in the most severe cases, delusions and hallucinations.