



Baby Blues

It is important to talk to your health care provider about how you are feeling after baby is born. There is a lot going on, but your health and wellbeing is a priority. Talk to your healthcare provider and loved ones about any symptoms you are experiencing.

It is common for new moms to experience “baby blues”. The majority of women (70-80%) experience at least some symptoms after childbirth. Generally, this will start within the first couple of days after delivery, peak around one week, and taper off by the end of the second week postpartum. The symptoms may last for minutes or hours each day and should lessen and disappear after about 14 days.

Symptoms include:

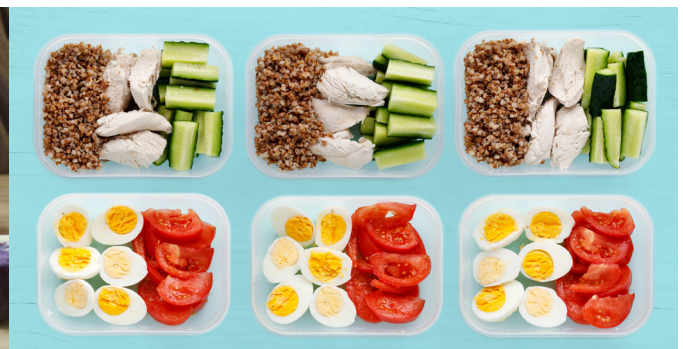
- Weepiness or crying for no apparent reason
- Impatience
- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Anxiety
- Fatigue
- Insomnia (even when the baby is sleeping)
- Sadness
- Mood changes
- Poor concentration

This form of mild depression is thought to be caused by the sudden change in hormones after delivery, combined with stress, isolation, sleep deprivation, and fatigue that can come along with bringing a new baby home. The baby blues are considered normal, but if your symptoms do not go away after a few weeks or worsen, you may be suffering from postpartum depression. There are many resources and treatment options available for those dealing with postpartum depression. It is vital to seek help and not ignore the symptoms!

In the beginning, postpartum depression can look like the normal baby blues. In fact, postpartum depression and the baby blues share many symptoms (mood swings, crying, sadness, insomnia, and irritability). The difference is that with postpartum depression, the symptoms are more severe (such as suicidal thoughts or an inability to care for your newborn) and longer lasting.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MY SYMPTOMS?

- Talk! Get emotional support. Be honest with your healthcare providers about how you are feeling. Talk to friends, family members, your partner, and/or other people you trust about how you are feeling. There are also many support groups available.
- Keep a journal of all your thoughts and feelings.
- Ask for help. Get help from your partner, friends, family, or neighbors. Get help with meals, other children, getting into a “routine”, or any help that you need. Do not expect to handle everything alone.
- Don’t expect perfection. Get rid of unrealistic expectations (a perfectly clean house, being able to do it all yourself, etc.) Give yourself time to heal, to adjust to your new “job,” and to establish feeding and sleeping routines.
- Proper nutrition is key! Include protein, complex carbohydrates, Omega 3 fatty acids (DHA and EPA), vitamin D3, and folate in your diet daily.
 - Incorporate complex carbohydrates such as beans, legumes, whole grains, and vegetables.
 - The best sources of EPA and DHA are cold water fish such as salmon, tuna, sardines, anchovies, and herring (most of which are also high in Vitamin D3). It is also possible to supplement with a high-quality omega 3 fish oil supplement that contains DHA and EPA. The official omega-3 supplement of the American Pregnancy Association is Nordic Naturals’ Prenatal
 - DHA, which provides 480 mg DHA and 205 mg of EPA per serving (2 soft gels).
 - Vitamin D3 can be found in the fish listed above, as well as in the following foods: egg (yolk), liver, fortified foods such as milk, orange juice with added vitamin D, and fortified cereals. Try to get a few minutes of sunshine each day to help with vitamin D synthesis!
 - Folate/folic acid is in many foods including dark green leafy vegetables, fruits, nuts, beans, peas, seafood, eggs, meat, and grains. Many cereals and grains are fortified with folic acid. Spinach, liver, asparagus, and brussel sprouts are among the foods with the highest folate levels.
 - Whole grains, fruits and vegetables, dairy products, beans/legumes, eggs, meat, and seafood are the foods listed in each of these sections. Focus on getting a good variety of these foods each day.



If symptoms worsen or last longer than a few weeks, talk to your provider and seek help. If you suspect you are suffering from postpartum depression, the smartest and strongest step you can take for your family is to find help as soon as possible! Just as you would seek help for any other potentially serious condition, seek help for postpartum depression as well.

The information contained here within is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read.

If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor, go to the emergency department, or call 911 immediately. GemCare Wellness (GCW) does not recommend or endorse any specific tests, physicians, products, procedures, opinions, or other information that may be mentioned here within. Reliance on any information provided by GCW, GCW employees, contracted writers, or medical professionals presenting content for publication here within is solely at your own risk.

References:

- <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/postpartum-depression-and-the-baby-blues.htm>
- <https://americanpregnancy.org/first-year-of-life/baby-blues-or-postpartum-depression/>
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