



Postpartum Depression

Postpartum mood disorders are typically separated into three subcategories: the “baby blues”, postpartum depression (PPD), and postpartum psychosis (PPP). The “baby blues” is the least severe and most common. Symptoms typically resolve within a few weeks.

Postpartum depression (PPD) occurs in approximately 15% of new mothers. How often PPD symptoms occur, how long they last, and how intense they feel can be different for each person. One size does not fit all. One woman with PPD may look and sound completely different from the next one. PPD is believed to be caused by multiple interrelated factors including hormonal changes, physical changes, and stress. Symptoms may occur a few days after delivery or sometimes as late as a year later. Many women will have alternating good and bad days; symptoms can be mild or severe.

SYMPTOMS OF PPD

- Crying more often than usual
- Feelings of anger
- Withdrawing from loved ones
- Feeling numb or disconnected from your baby
- Worrying that you will hurt the baby
- Doubting your ability to care for your baby
- Lasting sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
- Hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Feelings of irritability or restlessness

- Loss of interest in hobbies and activities
- Loss of energy
- Problems concentrating, recalling details, and making decisions
- Difficulty falling asleep or sleeping too much
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts
- Aches or pains that do not get better with treatment

Since PPD symptoms can range in severity, it's very important that you discuss any of these symptoms with your healthcare provider.

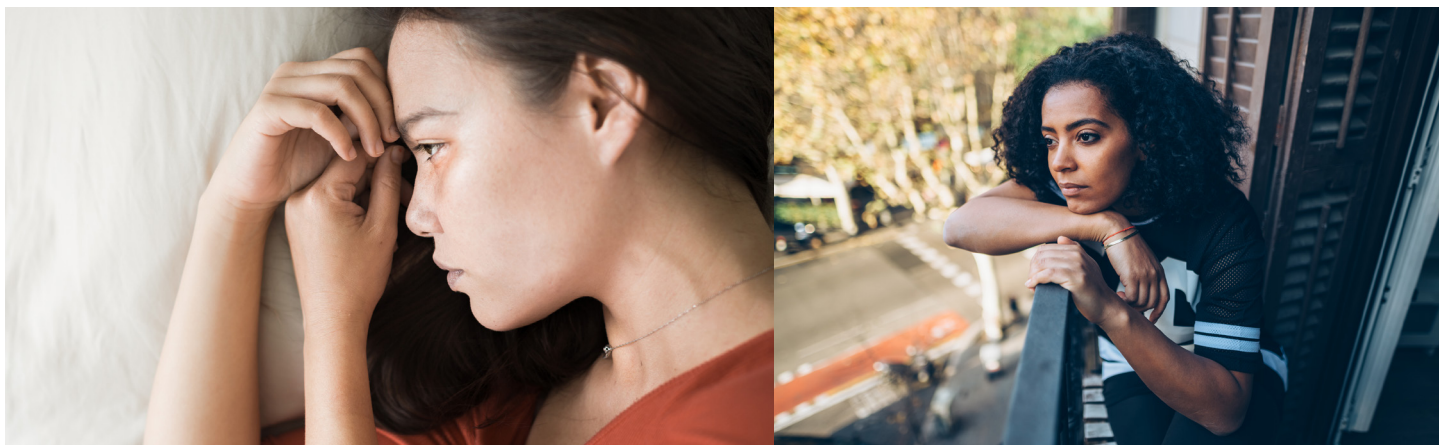
TREATMENT

Postpartum depression is treatable, and most people get better with treatment. If you think you may be depressed, the first step to seeking treatment is to talk to your health care provider. You can ask your health care provider for a referral to a mental health professional who specializes in PPD. While PPD is very common, it is not normal. You don't have to feel this way as a new mother, and there are effective treatments that can put you on the road to recovery. Treatment may include therapy and/or medication. Seeking treatment in a timely manner is important. The longer you wait to get help, the longer it may take for you to feel better.

WHEN WILL I FEEL BETTER?

Many moms wonder how long it will take to recover from PPD. There are many different variables affecting how long it takes each person to get better.

- How long you suffered with PPD before getting treatment is one factor. The sooner you seek treatment the sooner you should start to see progress.
- The severity of your symptoms also plays a role.



- Another big variable is also how effective the treatment is that you are receiving. In mental health, what works for one person does not always work for another. There are many types of therapies, medications, and support groups. You **MUST** speak up about how you're feeling and how the treatment plan you are on is, or is not, affecting your symptoms. If what you've been doing isn't working, work with your healthcare professional to try something different. Or seek a different professional entirely.
- Your support system will affect your recovery. This may be family members, friends, or a support group. If people around you are not supportive this could slow your progress.
- Follow your treatment plan and take care of yourself. Medication cannot work if you do not take it as prescribed, support groups will not be helpful if you don't show up, and therapy will not be helpful if you do not open up to your therapist or if you are unwilling to try techniques your counselor suggests. You must take a key role in your recovery process.

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:

1. <https://americanpregnancy.org/first-year-of-life/forms-of-postpartum-depression/>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/depression/>
3. <https://postpartumprogress.com/six-things-that-can-affect-how-quickly-youll-recover-from-postpartum-depression>
4. <https://americanpregnancy.org/first-year-of-life/baby-blues-or-postpartum-depression/>
5. <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/postpartum-depression-and-the-baby-blues.htm>
6. <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Folate-HealthProfessional/>

V01112021