

POSTPARTUM ADJUSTMENT

BABY BLUES *(not considered a disorder)*

Typical symptoms include mood swings, tearfulness, lack of concentration, irritability and anxiety.

- caused by major lifestyle changes and changing hormone levels
- affects between 70 to 80% of new moms
- begins within one week postpartum, symptoms may persist up to three weeks
- can occur when weaning from breastfeeding

What helps?

- Talk to other new moms. Know that you are not alone and these feelings and reactions are normal and temporary.
- Talk about your feelings with your partner or a trusted friend.
- Rest as much as possible.
- Eat small, healthy snacks often and drink extra water.
- Identify what help you need and let others know what they can do.
- Keep life simple, lower housekeeping standards.
- Limit visitors if necessary.

POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION/ANXIETY

Typical symptoms include uncontrollable crying, irritability, poor concentration, anxiety, hopelessness, feelings of failure, guilt, intrusive and disturbing thoughts, appetite and sleep disturbances.

- caused by a combination of hormonal, psychological and environmental factors
- affects 15 to 20% of moms and 10% of partners, regardless of background
- usually begins gradually but can be rapid and begin anytime in the first year
- symptoms can range from mild to severe
- emotions may include intense fear and guilt
- discomfort around baby or lack of feelings towards baby
- mom may break off all social contact and give up activities she used to enjoy
- physical symptoms or complaints without apparent physical cause

What helps?

Postpartum depression is a real illness that responds well to treatment. Your physician may recommend counseling, support groups, and/or medication. In most cases, breastfeeding will not need to be suspended. Your physician can select a drug that is safe for your baby. The sooner you are treated, the sooner you will feel better and can begin to enjoy motherhood.



See reverse side for the *Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)*



POSTPARTUM PSYCHOSIS *(rare, occurs in one to two 1,000 births and usually begins within two weeks after delivery)*

Typical symptoms include seeing things or hearing voices that are not there, inability to sleep even when exhausted, refusing to eat, extreme confusion, distrusting other people and thoughts of harming self, baby or others.

What helps?

This requires immediate medical attention. Contact a health care provider or have a support person take the mother directly to an emergency center. For emergencies, call 911.

THIS IS A SCREENING TOOL FOR POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION.

Circle the answer that best describe how you've felt in the past seven days. Add up the numbers circled.

1. I have been able to laugh and see the funny side of things.

- 0 = as much as I always could
- 1 = not quite so much now
- 2 = definitely not so much now
- 3 = not at all

2. I have looked forward with enjoyment to things.

- 0 = as much as I ever did
- 1 = rather less than I used to
- 2 = definitely less than I used to
- 3 = hardly at all

3. I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong.

- 0 = no, never
- 1 = not very often
- 2 = yes, some of the time
- 3 = yes, most of the time

4. I have been anxious or worried for no good reason.

- 0 = no, not at all
- 1 = hardly ever
- 2 = yes, sometimes
- 3 = yes, very often

5. I have felt scared or panicky for no good reason.

- 0 = no, not at all
- 1 = no, not much
- 2 = yes, sometimes
- 3 = yes, quite a lot

6. Things have been getting on top of me.

- 0 = no, I have been able to cope
- 1 = no, most of the time I have coped quite well
- 2 = yes, sometimes I haven't been coping as well as usual
- 3 = yes, most of the time I haven't been able to cope at all

7. I have been so unhappy that I have had difficulty sleeping.

- 0 = no, not at all
- 1 = not very often
- 2 = yes, sometimes
- 3 = yes, most of the time

8. I have felt sad or miserable.

- 0 = no, not at all
- 1 = not very often
- 2 = yes, quite often
- 3 = yes, most of the time

9. I have been so unhappy that I have been crying.

- 0 = no, not at all
- 1 = only occasionally
- 2 = yes, quite often
- 3 = yes, most of the time

10. The thought of harming myself has occurred to me.

- 0 = never
- 1 = hardly ever
- 2 = sometimes
- 3 = yes, quite often

** If your answer to question #10 is anything other than "0", you need to immediately call your OB Provider, go to an ER Center, or call 911.*

SCORE

If your total score is 12 or higher: *Call your health provider.*

If your score is lower than 12: *Repeat the test periodically to monitor your postpartum adjustment.*

No matter what your score is: *If you're not feeling like "you," speak to your health care provider.*

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 **ONLINE RESOURCES**

Online support groups: postpartum.net/psi-online-support-meetings

Postpartum Support International
postpartum.net

The Postpartum Stress Center
postpartumstress.com

Father's support
postpartummen.com