



Coping With the Baby Blues

Postpartum Depression

It's normal to feel a jumble of emotions after your baby is born. Some mothers are elated from day one. Others waffle between anxiousness and happiness. You may feel overwhelmed and uncertain. "Baby blues" are a common experience for mothers after giving birth.



Baby Blues

- Your feelings of depression may result from an inability to relate to your baby and feel comfortable as a mother because there are so many other people getting involved, and it feels as if your baby belongs to the hospital and not to you.
- The time immediately after birth can feel like a loss that you need to grieve over.
- It's a new beginning that can feel like the end of your old self.
- You'll probably find out that your real baby is very different from the one you imagined for nine months. Your fantasy is over and it can be a painful process.
- Being a mother is probably very different than you had expected and it turns you into a person with very different responsibilities.
- You might find yourself confused or bursting into tears during a time you thought would bring great joy.
- Changing hormones are partly to blame. Fatigue and pain also play a role.
- A longer or shorter than expected labor or any unpleasantness in your hospital stay can be a factor in feeling blue.

Symptoms of Postpartum Depression

- sluggishness, fatigue, exhaustion
 - sadness
 - hopelessness
 - appetite and sleep disturbances
 - poor concentration, confusion
 - memory loss
 - overconcern for the baby
 - uncontrollable crying, irritability
 - lack of interest in the baby
 - fear of hurting yourself
 - exaggerated highs or lows
 - lack of interest in sex
 - lack of interest in your appearance
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Help Is on the Way

The reality of your changed role in life can feel overwhelming. It's important to give yourself the time and space to adjust. At least one in 10 mothers can't shake the baby blues.

Symptoms of postpartum depression can appear soon after birth or up to a year later. If you're experiencing any of the symptoms, contact your doctor. Women with postpartum depression can benefit from support groups, home care programs or medication. It's not necessary or wise to struggle alone with overwhelming feelings. It's OK to ask for help.