

PERINATAL DEPRESSION

Perinatal depression refers to depression that occurs during pregnancy or up to 12 months after delivery.

How common are perinatal depression and perinatal mood disorders?

Perinatal depression is considered one of the most common pregnancy complications. Up to 80% of women will experience some mood symptoms postpartum. The majority of these moms have the “Baby Blues.” About 1 in 5 women will experience depression. Some moms can experience another type of perinatal mood disorder, postpartum psychosis. It is very rare. It occurs in 1 or 2 births out of a 1000.

What is the difference between “Baby Blues” and depression?

While some people may refer to depression during the postpartum as “Baby Blues”, there is a difference. The difference between “Baby Blues” and depression is in the timing, severity and effect on the mom. “Baby Blues” occurs in the days following delivery. New moms may experience anxiousness, irritability, sudden mood swings, crying spells, sadness, loss of appetite and sleeping problems. The “Baby Blues” will go away on its own in a few days or by the time your baby is two weeks old. Moms with depression do experience similar symptoms. However, these symptoms last longer than two weeks and often start about 4 to 8 weeks after delivery. Depression will not go away on its own and affects a mom’s ability to cope and function. Depression is a medical condition and needs to be treated by a qualified health professional.

Checklist of Symptoms

Use this checklist if you think you have perinatal depression. If you have had any of the symptoms on the checklist for more than 2 weeks or your symptoms seem to be getting worse, you should call your doctor. It is important to share with your doctor how you are feeling. Take this checklist with you to help you discuss what you’ve been experiencing.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Sad | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor self care | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of confidence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guilty | <input type="checkbox"/> Appetite changes | <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughts of hurting yourself or your baby |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hopeless | <input type="checkbox"/> Hyperactivity | <input type="checkbox"/> Hopeless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worthless | <input type="checkbox"/> Hallucinations | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to make decisions | <input type="checkbox"/> Mood swings | <input type="checkbox"/> Full of doubts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confused | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritable | <input type="checkbox"/> Agitated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trouble sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Crying, even over little things | <input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelmed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delusions | | |

*Items in **bold print** require immediate attention. Please call your doctor. Only a trained health care professional can tell you if you have perinatal depression.