

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Ted Chelis
Ted.Chelis@winningstrat.com
(973) 286-8284

Postpartum Depression: Help is Out There for Women in Bergen County

Resources Also Include 24-Hour Statewide Help Line and Informational Web Site

Most new mothers – anywhere from 60 to 80 percent – experience at least a brief episode of the "baby blues" – feelings of sadness, anxiety, loneliness, or moodiness – within the first few days of giving birth. After a couple of weeks these symptoms typically disappear. However, when symptoms persist or deepen in intensity, they may be signs of postpartum depression (PPD). The important thing is to understand the difference and to get help when it is needed.

PPD can affect any woman who has recently had a baby, has ended a pregnancy or has miscarried, or who has stopped breast-feeding, but the signs of depression can also appear earlier – when a woman is pregnant, or even planning to be. Regardless of when it occurs, the key message is that PPD is treatable, and treatment is available. Healthcare providers can diagnose PPD and help a woman find the best treatment for her.

The causes may be biological, psychological, or hormonal. The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services estimates that one woman in eight experiences PPD.

There is no need to struggle alone. Family members can play an important role by recognizing the warning signs of PPD, helping the woman seek help and providing support. The warning signs are different for everyone but include:

- Feeling exhausted, irritable, angry or nervous
- Lack of interest in the baby
- Feelings of being a bad mother
- Crying uncontrollably
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or hopelessness
- Thoughts of harming the baby or herself

Women affected by PPD are fortunate to have numerous resources available to them. In this area, they can contact the Northern New Jersey Maternal/Child Health Consortium at (201) 843-7400 or the Gateway Northwest Maternal and Child Health Network at (973) 290-9444 for more information.

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services provides a statewide PPD helpline (1-800-328-3838) 24 hours a day, seven days a week to answer questions about PPD and available resources, as well as a comprehensive informational web site at (www.njspeakup.gov).

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Memo to Media: Please Run Only As a News Release, not as a Letter to the Editor.