



Recognizing Postpartum
Depression

*Speak Up
When You're
Down*



1-800-328-3838
www.njspeakup.gov



SPEAK UP WHEN YOU'RE DOWN

1-800-328-3838



If you think you or a loved one may have PPD:

- Talk about your feelings with people you trust
- Tell your doctor
- Ask family and friends to help care for the baby
- Eat a healthy diet
- Exercise for more energy
- Join a PPD support group
- Seek treatment if feelings of unhappiness last longer than two weeks
- Call 1-800-328-3838 to find treatment services near your home (New Jersey residents)
- Visit www.njspeakup.gov

Healthy feelings between a mother and her child are important for the baby's physical and emotional growth. Waiting too long to treat PPD may result in long-lasting effects.

Healthcare providers and licensed counselors can help a woman find the treatment that is best for her. This treatment includes the right therapy, safe medication, and support groups.

*"The positive aspect
of my getting help for PPD
is that I am a
stronger woman now."*

— ELIZABETH, ROEBLING, NJ.



HIGHS & LOWS, UPS & DOWNS: THE MANY MOODS OF PPD

Every new baby is one of a kind and so is every new mom. Some women seem to sail through pregnancy and the first days of motherhood joyfully. Others ride a roller coaster of emotions, feeling happy and excited one minute and lonely or tearful the next. Most of the time, feelings of sadness are mild and pass quickly, but sometimes they are serious and don't go away. The important thing is to understand the difference and to get help when it is needed.

Up to 80 percent of new mothers cry easily or feel stressed following the birth of a baby. These feelings, known as the "baby blues," usually go away in a couple of weeks. However, some women feel a heavy sadness that doesn't go away. These women may have postpartum depression (PPD) or, more rarely, a condition known as postpartum psychosis. A woman with one of these more serious problems may have difficulty bonding with her baby. She may feel that she is not a good mother. She may think that she doesn't love her baby enough.

These feelings are upsetting. However, women need to know that treatment is available.

*"Women need to understand
that postpartum depression
is normal. It happens
to even the most mentally
balanced woman."*

– ALYSON, EAST WINDSOR, NJ.

PPD: TEMPORARY & TREATABLE

Having a baby is a major life change. PPD can affect any woman who:

- Is pregnant
- Has recently had a baby
- Has ended a pregnancy or has miscarried
- Has stopped breast-feeding

PPD can appear days or even months after childbirth. The warning signs are different for everyone but include:

- Trouble sleeping, or sleeping too much
- Changes in appetite – eating much more or much less
- Feeling irritable, angry, or nervous
- Feeling exhausted
- Not enjoying life as much as in the past
- Lack of interest in the baby
- Lack of interest in friends and family
- Lack of interest in sex
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Feeling hopeless
- Crying uncontrollably
- Feelings of being a bad mother
- Trouble concentrating
- Low energy
- Thoughts of harming the baby or herself

Family and friends may feel upset by these mood changes; in fact, they may notice that there is a problem even before the new mom does. They can help by being patient and supportive.

Love and support, however, may not be enough. When symptoms last longer than two weeks or affect a woman's ability to enjoy her daily life, loved ones should encourage the new mother to get help right away. Whether symptoms are mild or severe, with proper treatment, anyone can recover from PPD.

YOUNG & OLDER, URBAN & SUBURBAN: PPD CAN AFFECT ANYONE

No one is 100 percent sure why postpartum depression happens, but risk factors include:

- Changes in the body's hormone levels
- A difficult pregnancy
- A birth that did not go as planned
- Medical problems with the mother or baby
- Not getting enough sleep
- Feeling alone
- Loss of freedom
- Sudden changes in the home or work routines
- Personal or family history of depression
- Previous experience with PPD
- Not having enough support from family and friends
- High levels of stress

Although some women are more likely to experience depression than others, PPD can happen with any pregnancy or birth, even if a woman has had other babies without emotional problems. Women of every culture, age, income level, and race can have PPD.

It is important to remember that PPD is no one's fault, and treatment is available.

PHONE

1-800-328-3838

WEB SITE

njspeakup.gov



When a Woman Has a Baby...

1 woman in 10

Experiences depression during pregnancy. These symptoms are like the baby blues but happen before the baby is born.

8 women in 10

Experience the baby blues after giving birth. They may cry for no apparent reason, feel impatient, irritable, restless, and anxious.

1 woman in 8

Experiences postpartum depression. A woman with PPD may feel sluggish, sad, confused, anxious, irritable, guilty, and have difficulty remembering things. She may have trouble eating and sleeping. She may have fears of harming the baby or herself. Her moods might change from being very happy to very sad. She may feel out of control. She may want to avoid seeing people or talking about her feelings.

1 woman in 1,000

Experiences postpartum psychosis, which usually happens within the first three months after birth. This illness is rare, and symptoms are very severe. A woman with psychosis does not know what is real and what is imagined. She may have hallucinations or delusions. She may not be able to sleep. Her actions may be unpredictable.

In New Jersey

Between 11,000 and 16,000 women suffer from PPD every year.



Jon S. Corzine
Governor



Fred M. Jacobs, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner

