

**P**ostpartum means the time after childbirth. A woman's body goes through multiple alterations during and post pregnancy. Most women acquire the "baby blues," or feel dejected, regretful or empty, within a few days of giving birth. For the new mothers, the baby blues eradicate in about three to five days. If baby blues don't go away or you feel desolated, hopeless, or empty for longer than 2 weeks, you may have postpartum depression feeling hopeless or empty after childbirth is not a regular or expected part of being a mother.

Postpartum depression (PPD) is a type of depression that affects some mothers after giving birth. Postpartum depression is a serious mental illness that involves the brain and affects the behavior and physical health. If a mother is struggling with

depression, with sad, flat, or empty feelings don't go away and are interfering with the day-to-day life. Postpartum depression is a serious, but treatable medical illness involving feelings of extreme sadness, indifference and/or anxiety, as well as changes in energy, sleep, and appetite.

It carries risks for the mother and child. For most women, having a baby is a very exciting, joyous, and often anxious time. But for women with postpartum, or peripartum, depression it can become very distressing and difficult. They might feel unconnected to their baby, as if they are not the baby's mother, or they might not love or care for the baby. These feelings can be mild to severe. Postpartum Depression is found to be a common problem after pregnancy.



## POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION



According to a recent study one in nine new mothers has postpartum depression. It is also found that postpartum depression does not solely affect the mothers. A study found that around 10 percent of new fathers experience postpartum or prenatal depression. Depression is usually caused by emotional, stressful events, a biological change triggering an imbalance of brain chemicals, or both. Some normal changes after pregnancy can cause symptoms similar to those of depression. Many mothers feel overwhelmed when a new baby comes home.

But any of the following symptoms might indicate postpartum depression if they persist for more than 2 weeks and that's when it might be time to consult a medical health professional.

Some of the symptoms of Postpartum Depress could include Feeling sad, hopeless, or overwhelmed, crying spells, thoughts of hurting the baby or oneself, not feeling connected to the baby, disturbances in the appetite, loss of memory, concentration and attention, losing interest in pleasurable activities, withdrawing, feeling worthless, guilty and a bad mother to name a few of the symptoms.

Most women do not share such feelings and confide it to themselves because they might feel embarrassed, ashamed, or guilty about feeling depressed when they are supposed to be happy.

They may also worry they will be seen as bad mothers. Hormonal changes have the potential to trigger symptoms of postpartum depression.

While pregnant, levels of the female hormones estrogen and progesterone are the highest realm of the spectrum. During the first 24 hours after childbirth, hormone levels quickly drop back to normal, pre-pregnancy levels.

This sudden change in hormone levels lead to postpartum depression. Difference between baby blues and postpartum depression should be recognized, many women also go through baby blues in the early days of childbirth, during which the mother goes through varied symptoms some of them would be having mood swings, feeling sad, anxious or overwhelmed, having crying spells, loss of appetite or having troubled sleep.

But the main difference between postpartum depression and baby blues lays in the intensity of the problem, baby blues generally disappear after three to five days of childbirth the symptoms of postpartum depression last longer and are more severe. Postpartum depression usually begins within the first month after childbirth, but it can begin during pregnancy or for up to a year after birth.

If dealt with it well in time postpartum depression can be dealt with at home by having adequate hours

of sleep each day, that is, sleep while the baby is sleeping. Don't try to do too much or to do everything by yourself. Ask your partner, family, and friends for help. Talk about your feelings with your partner, supportive family members, and friends. Mothers with Postpartum Depression should express their feelings overtly to people whom she can trust, rather than repressing the emotions. Self-help groups are beneficial. Not only do they provide access to useful guidance, but also access

This type of therapy is based on the principle that the thoughts can trigger depression. The individual is taught how to better manage the relationship between her thoughts and state of mind. The aim is to alter the thought patterns so that they become more positive.

Clinically Postpartum Depression can be dealt with some therapies such as talk therapy which involves talking to a therapist, psychologist, or social worker to learn strategies to change how depression makes you think, feel, and act.

Electroconvulsive Therapy can be used in extreme cases to treat postpartum depression. During severe postpartum Depression along with therapies medication needs to be given to the patient which is prescribed antidepressants.

These medicines can help relieve symptoms of depression and some can be taken while the mother is breast feeding. Depression can affect the mother and the baby.

Getting treatment is important for both the individuals. Taking medicines for depression or going to therapy does not make a woman a bad mother or a failure. Getting help is considered a sign of strength.

Many women have postpartum depression. It may take time, but you can get better with treatment.

to other parents with similar problems, concerns, and symptoms. This may reduce the feeling of isolation. Studies have found that cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can be successful in moderate cases of Postpartum Depression. Cognitive therapy is effective.



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