

Postpartum Depression

The basics

Signs and symptoms of depression after childbirth vary, and they can range from mild to severe.

Postpartum “baby blues”

Signs and symptoms of “baby blues” – which last only a few days to a week or two after your baby is born – can include the following:

- Mood swings
- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Irritability
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Crying
- Reduced concentration
- Appetite problems
- Trouble sleeping

Physical, hormonal, and emotional changes can contribute to symptoms of baby blues. “Baby blues” should be monitored but will often diminish within a couple of weeks.

Postpartum depression symptoms

Postpartum depression may be mistaken for baby blues at first – but the signs and symptoms are more intense and last longer, eventually interfering with your ability to care for your baby and handle other daily tasks. Symptoms usually develop within the first few weeks after giving birth, but may begin later, up to six months after birth. Untreated postpartum depression may last for many months or longer. Symptoms include:

- Depressed mood or severe mood swings
- Excessive crying
- Difficulty bonding with your baby
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Loss of appetite or eating much more than usual
- Inability to sleep (insomnia) or sleeping too much
- Overwhelming fatigue or loss of energy
- Reduced interest and pleasure in activities you used to enjoy
- Intense irritability and anger
- Fear that you are not a good mother
- Feelings of worthlessness, shame, guilt, or inadequacy
- Diminished ability to think clearly, concentrate, or make decisions
- Severe anxiety and panic attacks
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide

If you are struggling with any of these symptoms, please reach out to your healthcare provider for ways to manage and treat postpartum depression. Call us at 701-456-4200.