

Motherhood is an adjustment and lifestyle change. For some women this transition is more difficult than expected. A wide range of emotions may leave the mother feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and uncertain.

Baby Blues

The *baby blues* is a very common reaction within the first few days of delivery. Sixty to eighty percent of new mothers experience the baby blues. The symptoms may include tearfulness, irritability, impatience, fatigue, excessive worry and some sleep problems. The baby blues come on suddenly within two to four days after delivery and can last for approximately two weeks. The symptoms can disappear on their own just as quickly as they appear.

Please speak with your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife or pediatrician if these symptoms last more than two weeks.

Postpartum Depression

Postpartum depression affects at least 1 in 8 new mothers. The symptoms can appear within days of delivery, or gradually, sometimes up to a year after the birth. Symptoms may include:

- Depressed mood most of the day
- Fatigue
- Lack of interest in the baby
- Guilt or feelings of worthlessness
- Fear of harming yourself or your baby
- Poor concentration
- Over concern for your baby
- Uncontrollable crying
- Lack of appetite
- Lack of interest in normal activity
- Sleeping too much or too little

Please speak with your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife or pediatrician if these symptoms last more than two weeks.

Postpartum Anxiety Disorders

While postpartum depression is the most widely recognized reaction, women may develop an anxiety or obsessive-compulsive response. Some women may not feel depressed, but may have symptoms of anxiety and very distinct physical symptoms. Anxiety or obsessive-compulsive symptoms may include:

- Rapid breathing
- Chest pain
- Shaking
- Dizziness or light headedness
- Hot or cold flashes
- Fast heart rate
- Intense anxiety and/or fear
- Sense of doom
- Numbness and tingling in hands and/or around mouth
- Feeling like you are having a heart attack or are dying
- Afraid to leave the house
- Intrusive thinking (repetitive, unwanted thoughts)

Please speak with your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife or pediatrician if these symptoms last more than two weeks.

Postpartum Psychosis

Postpartum psychosis is the most severe and the rarest of postpartum mood disorders. One in 1,000 women experience postpartum psychosis. The onset is usually sudden, within the first 48-72 hours of delivery. Symptoms may include a break in reality such as hallucinations and or delusions and hearing voices. These voices or thoughts may be telling you to hurt yourself or your baby. You also may be very agitated or withdrawn.

Postpartum psychosis is an urgent situation and requires immediate intervention. A family member should take the new mom to the hospital immediately and separate her from her child/children.



Questions For New Mothers

(adapted from the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale)

When answering these questions, mark the answer that describes how you have been feeling over the last 7 days.

- I am unable to laugh and see the funny side of things.
Yes No
- I cannot look forward with enjoyment to things.
Yes No
- I blame myself unnecessarily when things go wrong.
Yes No
- I feel scared or panicky for no good reason.
Yes No
- I have been feeling very overwhelmed. **Yes No**
- I have been so unhappy that I have had difficulty sleeping. **Yes No**
- I feel sad or miserable. **Yes No**
- I have been so unhappy that I have been crying.
Yes No
- The thought of harming myself has occurred to me.
Yes No

(If you answer yes, please call your doctor immediately)

If you answer “yes” to two or more, please talk to your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife or pediatrician immediately. Postpartum Mood Disorders are treatable. It is important to receive help as early as possible. The sooner you receive treatment, the sooner the healing can begin.

For more information about A Mother’s Wings or additional resources please contact Mental Health America of Colorado.

Mental Health America of Colorado
720-208-2220 or 800-456-3249
www.mhacolorado.org

**Postpartum Support International
Postpartum Depression Helpline:**
800-944-4PPD
www.postpartum.net

**Kempe Postpartum Depression Intervention
Program:**
303-864-5845
www.kempecenter.org

A Mother’s Wings
720-208-2244 or 800-456-3249, ext. 305.
Your call will be returned within 24 hours. Or contact us
at amother's_wings@mhacolorado.org.



A Program of Mental Health America of Colorado

Our mission is to educate the local community on Postpartum Mood Disorders. By providing information and support to those affected, we hope women and their loved ones may seek available services.



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