

Maternal Mental Health Month



January is Maternal Mental Health Month. Pregnancy and a new baby can bring a range of life changes and emotions about those changes. Many women feel overwhelmed, sad, and anxious during their pregnancies and following the birth of their baby. For some women, these feelings go away on their own. For others, these emotions may stay for a while and can be more serious.

Postpartum depression (PPD) and anxiety are medical conditions that happen after a woman has a baby. Researchers believe that depression is one of the most common problems women experience during and after pregnancy. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 1 in 8 women experience postpartum depression.

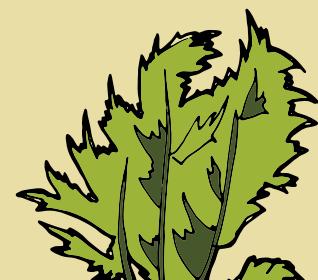
Women with postpartum depression or anxiety may feel:

- Extremely sad or angry without warning
- Foggy or may have trouble completing tasks
- “Robotic,” like they are just going through the motions of life
- Very anxious around the baby and their other children
- Guilty and like they are failing at motherhood
- Unusually irritable or angry

Postpartum depression and anxiety can often feel like they control your life and can be hard to get rid of on your own. Both postpartum depression and anxiety are treatable. If you are experiencing symptoms of PPD, reach out to your doctor to discuss treatment options. In addition to working with a healthcare professional, support can include:

- **Rest.** It's important you get as much rest and sleep as possible.
- **Ask for support.** Reach out to your partner, family or friends for help and support with the baby and other tasks.
- **Make time for yourself.** Go out with friends, spend time alone with your partner or give yourself a self-care day.
- **Find a community of other new mothers.** Talking with other mothers may make you feel less alone in this experience. Look into support groups in your area.

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Learn more: nichd.nih.gov/ncmhep/initiatives