

DEPRESSION DURING AND AFTER PREGNANCY

Q: What is depression?

A: Depression is more than just feeling “blue” or “down in the dumps” for a few days. It’s a serious illness that involves the brain. With depression, sad, anxious, or “empty” feelings don’t go away and interfere with day-to-day life and routines. These feelings can be mild to severe. The good news is that most people with depression get better with treatment.

Q: How common is depression during and after pregnancy?

A: Depression is a common problem during and after pregnancy. About 13 percent of pregnancy women and new mothers have depression.

Q: How do I know if I have depression?

A: When you are pregnant or after you have a baby, you may be depressed and not know it. Some normal changes during and after pregnancy can cause symptoms similar to those of depression. If you have any of the following symptoms of depression for more than 2 weeks, call your doctor.

- Feeling restless or moody
- Feeling sad, hopeless, and overwhelmed
- Crying a lot
- Having no energy or motivation
- Eating too little or too much
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Having trouble focusing or making decisions
- Having memory problems
- Feeling worthless and guilty
- Losing interest or pleasure in activities you use to enjoy
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Having headaches, aches and pains

Your doctor can figure out if your symptoms are caused by depression or something else.

Call 911 or your doctor if you have thoughts of harming yourself or your baby!

Q: What causes depression? What about postpartum depression?

A: There is no single cause. Rather, depression likely results from a combination of factors:

- Depression is a mental illness that tends to run in families.
- Changes in brain chemistry or structure are believed to play a big role in depression.
- Stressful life events, such as death of a loved one, caring for an aging family member, abuse, and poverty, can trigger depression.
- Hormonal factors unique to women may contribute to depression in some women.

Depression after childbirth is called postpartum depression. Hormonal changes may trigger symptoms of postpartum depression. In the first 24 hours after childbirth, hormone levels quickly return to normal. Researchers think the big change in hormone levels may lead to depression.

Q. Are some women more at risk for depression during and after pregnancy?

A: Certain factors may increase your risk of depression during and after pregnancy:

- A personal history of depression or another mental illness
- A family history of depression or another mental illness
- A lack of support from family and friends
- Anxiety or negative feelings about the pregnancy
- Problems with a previous pregnancy or birth
- Marriage or money problems
- Stressful life events
- Young age
- Substance use
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Q. What is the difference between postpartum blues, postpartum depression and postpartum psychosis?

A: Many women have the baby blues in the days after childbirth. If you have the baby blues, you may:

- Have mood swings
- Feel sad, anxious, or overwhelmed
- Have crying spells
- Lose your appetite
- Have trouble sleeping
- Have trouble sleeping

The symptoms are not severe and do not need treatment.

The symptoms of postpartum depression last longer and are more severe. Postpartum depression can begin anytime within the first year after childbirth. If you have postpartum depression, you may have any of the symptoms of depression listed above. Symptoms may also include:

- Thoughts of hurting the baby
- Thoughts of hurting yourself
- Not having any interest in the baby

Postpartum depression needs to be treated by a doctor.

Postpartum psychosis is rare. It occurs in about 1 to 4 out of every 1,000 births. It usually begins in the first 2 weeks after childbirth. Women who have bipolar disorder or another mental health problem called schizoaffective disorder have a higher risk for postpartum psychosis. Symptoms may include:

- Seeing things that aren't there
- Feeling confused
- Having rapid mood swings
- Trying to hurt yourself or your baby

Q: What should I do if I have symptoms of during or after pregnancy?

A: Call your doctors if:

- Your baby blues don't go away after 2 weeks
- Symptoms of depression get more and more intense
- It is hard for you to perform tasks at work or at home
- You cannot care for yourself or your baby
- You have thoughts of harming yourself or your baby

Q: How is depression treated?

A: The two common types of treatment for depression are:

- **Therapy.** This involves talking to a therapist, psychologist, or social worker to learn to change how depression makes you think, feel, and act.

- **Medicine.** Your doctor can prescribe an antidepressant medicine which can help relieve symptoms of depression.

These treatment methods can be used alone or together. Talk with your doctor about the benefits and risks of taking medicine to treat depression during pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Q: What can happen if depression is not treated?

A: Untreated depression can hurt you and your baby and can affect your ability to care for yourself or your baby.

For more information:

Office of Women's Health

1-800-994-9662

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/>

National Institute of Mental Health (NIH, HHS)

Phone: 301-496-9576

[Http://www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

National Mental Health Association

Phone: 800-969-NMHA

<https://www.nmha.org>

National Mental Health information Center

Phone: 800-789-2647

<https://www.mentalhealth.org/>

Postpartum Education for Parents

Phone: 805-564-3888

<http://www.sbpep.org>

American Psychological Association Postpartum Support International

Phone: 800-374-2721

<http://www.apa.org>

Postpartum Support International

Phone: 800-944-4773

<http://www.postpartum.net>

PERINATAL MOOD INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT PROGRAMS

Good Samaritan Hospital, Mission Oaks Campus

Location: 15891 Los Gatos-Almaden Road

Los Gatos, CA 95032

Cost: Most insurance plans accepted

Contact: (408) 559-2000 for a free, confidential assessment

Maternal Outreach Mood Services (MOMS)

Location: El Camino Hospital

2500 Grant Road Mountain View, CA 94040

Cost: Most insurance plans cover the cost of care for the MOMS Program

Contact: (866) 789-6089 to schedule a free, confidential assessment.

POSTPARTUM MOOD SUPPORT GROUPS

Supporting Mamas (Virtual)

Adjusting to Motherhood Drop in support Group (weekly)

Class: Every Monday, 7:30pm-8:30pm or Thursday, 10am to 11:15am

Location: Virtual

Cost: Free, no need to pre-register

Contact: Cheryl at (408) 475-4408

Email: cheryl@supportingmamas.org

Adjusting to Motherhood Drop in support Group with Toddler (ages 1-5) (weekly)

Class: Every Thursday, 8pm-9pm

Location: (Virtual)

Cost: Free, no need to pre-register

Contact: Cheryl at (408) 475-4408

Email: cheryl@supportingmamas.org

Pregnancy & Postpartum Moods and Challenges Support Group (Virtual and Live classes)

Class: Monday's 1:30pm-3:00pm

Location: Blossom Birth & Family

290 S. California Ave, Suite A, Palo Alto, CA 94306

Cost: Drop in's: \$25, 8-Class Pass \$175, Monthly unlimited Pass \$199

Contact: (650)321-2326

Good Samaritan New Mother's Support Group (Virtual)

Class: Every Wednesday, 10am-11am

Location: Virtual

Cost: Free

Contact: To Register for classes and events (408) 559-2121

Pregnancy & Postpartum Resiliency Circle

Classes: Once a week for 6 sessions

Location: TBD Los Gatos, CA

Cost: \$45 per week (some insurances may cover)

Contact: Dolat Bolandi to Register and more information at (408)264-0100

BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

Blossom Birth Breastfeeding Connections (Live and Virtual classes offered)

Class: Every second and fourth Friday, 1:30pm-3:00pm

Location: Blossom Birth and Family

505 Barron Avenue Palo Alto, CA 94306

Cost: Free

Contact: (650) 321-2326

Understanding Breastfeeding eClass

Class: Different Dates Available

Link to Calendar: <https://goodsamsanjose.com/calendar/index.dot#/ce-landing-page/search>

Location: Virtual

Cost: \$55

Contact: To register for Classes and Events (408) 559-2121

La Leche League South Bay Evening Meeting (Virtual)

Classes: TBD

Location: Virtual

Cost: Free.

Website: <http://www.lllnorcal.org>

Contact: (408)641-0138 Email: llofgreatersanjose@gmail.com

Valley Medical Center Breastfeeding Support Group

Class: Every Wednesday, 11:00am – 12:00pm (Classes resume 2022)

Location: 751 S. Bascom Ave, San Jose, CA 95128

3rd Floor, Suite 340, Conference Room 3Q13

Cost: Free

Contact: (408) 885-5436