



Managing Your Emotions After Delivery

After the birth of a child, it is common for mothers to experience mood swings. These can be triggered by a combination of things, such as a change in hormones, lack of sleep and less time for yourself.

Even though this is a natural part of the postpartum period, it is important to bring this up to your Primary Care Physician or OB-GYN. They can offer support, provide a thorough assessment and recommend treatment options. Seeking help right away is a vital step in ensuring your mental health and fostering a nurturing environment for your family.

DEPRESSION

Depression is common after giving birth but can also happen during pregnancy. Women often wonder how they could feel sad when they think they should feel overjoyed about being a mother. This can be a confusing time, but there is no need to go through it alone. Any woman may become depressed during or after pregnancy. While signs and symptoms may vary, depression can be treated.

'BABY BLUES'

Approximately 70-80%* of all new mothers experience some negative feelings or mood swings after the birth of their child. Symptoms of the "baby blues" can appear within days after giving birth and may last up to two weeks.

Scheduling a postpartum appointment is crucial for several reasons. This visit allows health care providers to assess the physical and emotional recovery of the new mother, ensuring that any complications or concerns are addressed promptly. It also provides an opportunity to discuss family planning, breastfeeding challenges and mental health. By attending this appointment, new mothers can receive personalized guidance and support, fostering a healthier transition into motherhood.

POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

While the baby blues tend to last only a couple weeks, some women may be at greater risk for postpartum depression (PPD). This may be true if you've had a personal or family history of depression, anxiety or mental illness, or experienced a previous pregnancy loss (i.e., miscarriage or stillbirth).

Symptoms of PPD may appear within days or even up to one year after childbirth and can range from mild to severe. Such symptoms may include feelings of guilt and worthlessness, withdrawing from friends or family, and having little interest in your baby.



Are you at risk?

You may have PPD if:

- Your baby blues persist after two weeks.
- Symptoms of depression worsen.
- You find it difficult to care for yourself or your baby.
- You have thoughts of harming yourself or your baby.

IF THIS HAPPENS, IMMEDIATELY:

- Put your baby in a safe place, such as the crib.
- Find a quiet place and take a deep breath.
- Call your doctor or OB-GYN for help.
- Call a friend or family member, or dial 911 if it is an emergency.



TREATMENT FOR POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

PPD is a temporary disorder that can often be treated with therapy or medication, or both, in addition to caring support. If you experience any of the symptoms listed above, call your doctor immediately.

It is important for women who are diagnosed with PPD to continue their treatment even after showing signs of improvement, as some symptoms may return if treatment is stopped prematurely.

TAKE CARE OF 'MOM'

It's important to always be honest with yourself and how you feel. Below are a few helpful tips and reminders to keep you feeling at your best:

- Make and keep your doctors' appointments for your post-delivery checkup (usually 3-6 weeks).
- Express your feelings, both positive and negative. It's ok to cry.
- Be kind to yourself — eat right and get sleep. Try to rest when your baby naps.
- Talk to a supportive person or professional health care provider.
- Do something "just for you" each day, or as often as possible.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help, or accept help from others.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions or concerns about your health, call your doctor immediately, or call Independent Health's Behavioral Health Case Management services at **(716) 529-3945**.

You can also call Independent Health's 24-Hour Medical Help Line** at **1-800-501-3439**. The Help Line provides 24/7 access to an experienced registered nurse for non-emergency medical issues and advice after hours.

*American Pregnancy Association: <https://americanpregnancy.org/postpartum/baby-blues/>

**Independent Health's 24-Hour Medical Help Line should not be used for diagnosis or as a substitute for a physician.