



## What is postpartum depression? Postpartum depression (PPD) is a type of mood disorder that can affect people after childbirth.

PPD includes ongoing feelings of sadness, anxiety, and exhaustion that can make it hard to get through the day or care for your baby. Unlike the baby blues, which are common and usually go away within a couple of weeks, PPD is more serious and can last for months or even longer without treatment. Even if you don't know anyone else who had PPD, it's very common. It's a leading complication of pregnancy and it's often undiagnosed and untreated, making the time with a new baby more challenging than normal and creating long-term effects on both the parent and child. It's important to know the symptoms of PPD so that you can be aware and get help right away.

### Common symptoms include:

|                                                    |                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Persistent sadness</i>                          | <i>Feelings of anxiety</i>                                          |
| <i>Loss of interest</i>                            | <i>Suicidal thoughts</i>                                            |
| <i>Change in appetite</i>                          | <i>Feeling irritated easily</i>                                     |
| <i>Trouble sleeping</i>                            | <i>Not feeling as connected to your baby</i>                        |
| <i>Low energy or fatigue</i>                       | <i>Withdrawing from social interactions with family and friends</i> |
| <i>Feeling guilty</i>                              |                                                                     |
| <i>Difficult concentrating or making decisions</i> |                                                                     |

Some women are more likely to experience mental health struggles around pregnancy and birth. This includes women who:

- ▶ Have a personal or family history of mental health challenges
- ▶ Do not have strong support from community or loved ones
- ▶ Experienced a traumatic birth or past trauma
- ▶ Faced pregnancy complications like loss or birth differences
- ▶ Have a baby staying in the NICU

**Historical and systemic factors have disrupted family and kinship systems, creating chronic stress and challenges that can increase the risk of PMADs.**

## When the heart or mind feels heavy after birth, healing can come from many places:

- ✓ **Talk** to a provider or Indigenous Birthworker you trust
- ✓ **Spend time** with family, friends, Elders, and community for support
- ✓ **Connect** with others who may have been through the same and are compassionate
- ✓ **Seek guidance** from Elders and respected healers
- ✓ Using **traditional medicines** like smudging (in a well ventilated space), teas, or herbal baths may help bring balance
- ✓ **Being** on the land, resting, moving the body, and caring for yourself are all part of healing
- ✓ Seek out **counseling services**; you can do these both in-person or online if it's easier
- ✓ **Medication** such as antidepressants

**If something doesn't feel right during pregnancy or after birth, call on your community. You are not alone. Healing is stronger when shared.**

### Additional support

National Alliance on Mental Illness  
**1-800-950-NAMI (6264)**

National Maternal Health Hotlines  
**1-833-TLC-MAMA (6262)**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

Postpartum Support International  
Helpline **1-800-944-4773**

### Resources

An overview  
of PPD



CDC Hear Her  
Campaign

