

The first weeks of caring for a newborn baby are more than a full-time job. Although it is often a happy time, your feelings and moods may not be what you expected. Many women experience “baby blues.” Here are some tips to help you understand when feelings of sadness are normal, and when you should call your health care provider.

“Baby Blues”- are a normal, physiological and emotional adjustment to motherhood experienced by 50-80% of women. You may experience occasional periods of: anxiety, crying, irritability, mood swings, problems with appetite, sadness, or trouble sleeping. However, if these symptoms become severe and persist for more than a couple of weeks, you may be experiencing postpartum depression.

Postpartum Depression – experienced by 10-20% of women after delivery. It commonly begins within several weeks of the birth but may begin as late as 4-12 months after the birth of the baby. If you think you may be experiencing postpartum depression, contact your midwife or doctor. The resources listed below and on the reverse of this page may also be helpful.

Symptoms of postpartum depression can include:

- Feelings of great agitation, anxiety, sadness, or hopelessness.
- Poor concentration, confusion, memory loss/problems
- Chronic fatigue and exhaustion, severe insomnia or constant sleeping
- Crying for no apparent reason
- Fear of being alone or social isolation
- Excessive concern for baby or thinking your baby might be better off without you Neglecting care for self or baby
- Feeling guilty
- Don't feel like eating
- Feeling like you are not normal or not yourself anymore

If you have any of these symptoms, call your health care provider!

Postpartum Psychosis- Postpartum psychosis is a rare severe form of mental illness that begins during the postpartum period. Women who have postpartum psychosis may hear or see things that are not really there, and they act strangely. This may only be noted by a family member. Women who have postpartum psychosis may think that the baby is being harmed even if the baby is not in danger. This is a true emergency as this woman may hurt herself or hurt her baby. If you have thoughts of wanting to hurt yourself or your baby, call 911 and have someone you trust stay with you until help arrives.

Postpartum Anxiety - Postpartum anxiety is an excessive or extreme worry that feels like it never stops. The worry can be related to baby, in general or both. It is currently thought that 1 in 5 women have postpartum anxiety but it has not been studied enough to get a concrete number.

Ways to Help Postpartum Mood Disorders

- Get enough sleep
- Eat well – fruits, vegetables and protein
- Give yourself grace
- Exercise – 20 minutes of walking a day or every other day Try something that made you happy in the past
- Refer to your Perinatal Mood disorders email with tons of helpful tips and tricks
- Seek help immediately

If left untreated, postpartum depression can become severe. If you ever experience fear or fantasy of hurting the baby or yourself: immediately reach out for help. Call the 1-800 numbers on the postpartum resources page or call your midwife. We are here for you, no matter the circumstance.