




POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

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Many new mothers get the “baby blues.”
While you may feel joyous, it’s also normal
to feel tired from the hard work of childbirth
and caring for a newborn, or isolated
because you’re not with friends or doing
your usual activities. The “baby blues” can

start a few days after birth. They usually go away in a couple of weeks.

If this mental state feels more serious or lasts longer than a couple weeks, it may be postpartum depression. Postpartum depression (PPD) is a mental health condition that some women have after childbirth sometimes starting up to a year later.

What causes PPD?

No one really knows for sure, but there are a few things that may play a role in this condition.

- ◇ The demands of taking care of a baby, including the pressure to “do it all”
- ◇ A more difficult birth

- ◇ Changes in hormone levels after birth
- ◇ A personal or family history of depression
- ◇ A history of severe Premenstrual Syndrome
- ◇ Stress, especially when there is a lack of support from family or friends



- ◇ Relationship or money problems
- ◇ Big life changes
- ◇ Lack of sleep
- ◇ Changes in work or home schedules

Effects of PPD

- ◇ PPD may affect the way that you bond with your baby. You may experience:
 - Little desire to care for your baby
 - Avoiding holding or playing with your baby
 - Feeling angry with your baby

- Thinking about hurting your baby or yourself
- ◇ Your baby needs your love and care to grow and thrive. Without proper care and bonding, your baby may experience:
 - Delays in language development
 - Problems with learning and good behavior

How do you know if you have PPD?

While you have to see a doctor or counselor to be diagnosed with PPD, having certain thoughts may be a red flag. If you have had any of the following thoughts often or if they have lasted for 2 weeks or more, call your healthcare provider or talk to a trusted

nurse or prenatal doctor:

- ◇ “I feel very sad and helpless”
- ◇ “I have trouble sleeping”
- ◇ “I want to sleep all the time”
- ◇ “I don’t feel like eating”
- ◇ “I feel confused and distracted”
- ◇ “I don’t think I can be a good mother”

There’s no definite way to tell whether you have PPD without seeing a doctor or counselor.

- ◇ “I feel anxious and get angry easily”

- ◇ “I’m not interested in my baby”
- ◇ “I don’t want to get dressed or do daily tasks”
- ◇ “I’m constantly worried about my baby”
- ◇ “I don’t want to see friends and family”

How can you get help for PPD?

PPD can be treated! Take steps to help keep yourself and your new baby healthy. Asking for help can be hard, but the sooner you get help, the sooner you can start feeling better. PPD is not your fault. Remember, PPD is an illness. Your feelings don’t mean you are a ‘bad’ person or did something wrong.

- ◇ Call the Sisseton IHS Mental Health

Department at 605-698-7606 or 605-742-3808 to schedule an appointment.

- ◇ Visit PPD Hope at www.ppdhope.org.
- ◇ Visit Postpartum Support International at www.postpartum.net or 1-800-944-4PPD
- ◇ Talk with friends or family that may have also experienced PPD
- ◇ Talk to your doctors and nurses at IHS, the WIC, and Coteau for more resources
- ◇ Join a PPD support group in the SWO community



Get help right away if you have thoughts of harming yourself or your baby. Call a child abuse hotline (1-800-633-5155), a mental health crisis hotline (1-800-444-3989), or 911.

- ◇ Share your feelings with a friend or family member

- ◇ Try to sleep when your baby sleeps
- ◇ Eat healthy meals and snacks

Take care of yourself. There's a lot you can do on your own to feel better.

- ◇ Enjoy fresh air and sunshine. Try to spend some time outside every day. Even a short walk can make a difference.
- ◇ Rely on family and friends. You don't have to do it all. Ask for help with chores and housework.