

Understanding Postpartum Depression

Having a baby can bring on so many different emotions and expectations.

People around you might expect you to feel joy and excitement.

And you may want to feel those things.

But sometimes after having a baby, you may feel things you didn't expect to feel.

After having a baby, it's common to get what's known as the "baby blues."

When that happens, you may feel happy one minute and sad the next.

But the "baby blues" usually go away in a couple of weeks.

When those feelings last longer, it may be a condition called postpartum depression.

If you have postpartum depression, you may experience intense feelings.

You may cry often or lose the ability to find joy in your life.

You may feel like you could harm your baby or yourself.

Or you may feel distant from your baby.

Depression feels different for every person, so if you are depressed, you may experience other feelings too.

Sometimes those feelings may not be what you might expect when you're experiencing depression.

For instance, you may feel irritable or angry.

While postpartum depression is usually seen as something that happens after a baby is born, sometimes these symptoms begin during pregnancy.

The exact cause of postpartum depression isn't known.

But you can be at risk for many reasons, including the hormone changes that happen during pregnancy and a history of depression or other mood disorders.

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It's important to know that you didn't do anything to make this happen.

Anyone can experience postpartum depression.

And having it doesn't make you a bad parent.

Postpartum depression is a medical condition that requires treatment.

Treatment usually includes medicine and counseling.

So if you think you might have postpartum depression, talk to your doctor.

Together, you can find a treatment that works best for you.

You might also want to talk to your doctor about taking antidepressant medicine while breastfeeding.

There are many antidepressants that are safe to take while you're breastfeeding.

If you have postpartum depression, it's important for you to get the support you need.

Ask your family and friends for help with things like preparing meals and cleaning up around the house.

You can also ask them to watch your baby while you rest or take time to care for yourself.

Remember, having postpartum depression doesn't mean you're alone.

Many people experience it.

There's help for you out there, and it's important to get treatment.

You know yourself best.

If you feel like something is off, reach out for help.

The sooner you get help and treatment, the sooner you'll be on the road to feeling better.