



Postpartum Depression (PPD)



Overview

This type of depression develops in some mothers after childbirth. This makes it hard for you to care for your baby. And it can severely impact your life.

Causes

Postpartum depression does not have a single cause. It may result from the changes in your body, your mind and your life that you experience after your baby is delivered. It may be linked to changes in your hormone levels following your pregnancy. It may be linked to fatigue. It may be linked to the general loss of control you may feel as you care for your child.

Symptoms

Symptoms can begin in the days after the delivery, but they may begin weeks or months later. You may feel sad, hopeless and worthless. You may have severe mood swings and troubling thoughts. You may withdraw from others, and you may cry a lot. You may lose your appetite and have trouble sleeping. You may have panic attacks. You may have trouble forming a bond with your baby. For some women, symptoms are much more severe. They may have hallucinations, paranoia and trouble thinking clearly. They may attempt to harm themselves or their babies. This is a condition called "postpartum psychosis." It is a medical emergency.

Treatment

Treatment options for postpartum depression include medications and counseling. You may benefit from getting more rest, and from planning more time for yourself. You may benefit from talking to others and from making an effort to ask for help when you need it. You may also feel better if you eat healthy foods and engage in physical activity. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for your needs.

Actor portrayals in photos

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