

Do I Have Postpartum Depression?

This checklist will help you start a conversation with your doctor. Check the ones that best describe your experience and take it with you to share with your doctor at your next visit.

IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS, HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU:

- Felt sad, low, worthless, depressed or hopeless?
- Cried more than normal?
- Felt little interest in doing things you used to enjoy?
- Had trouble falling or staying asleep, or slept too much?
- Felt more tired than usual or had little energy?
- Had a poor appetite or been eating too much?
- Had trouble concentrating, thinking, or making decisions?
- Worried that you might hurt yourself or felt like you wanted to die?



Trying to get pregnant, being pregnant, or the birth of a baby can increase the risk for depression.

THE FOLLOWING EXPERIENCES MAY INCREASE YOUR RISK FOR DEPRESSION:

- Having a hard time getting pregnant
- Having twins or triplets
- Losing a baby
- Having a baby as a teen
- Having a baby before 38 weeks, or at too low a birth weight
- Having a baby who is different/with birth defects
- Cesarean Birth

This information was created and reviewed through a partnership with the UAMS Patient and Family Advisory Councils and the UAMS Center for Health Literacy.

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Many women experience depression. Depression has symptoms, just like any other illnesses, including:

- A low or sad mood
- Loss of interest in fun activities
- Changes in eating, sleep, and energy
- Problems in thinking, concentrating, and making decisions
- Feelings of worthlessness, shame or guilt
- Thoughts that life is not worth living

When many of these symptoms occur together and last for more than a week or two, this is depression.

POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION IS DEPRESSION THAT OCCURS AFTER HAVING A BABY.

The symptoms of postpartum depression are similar to symptoms for depression, but they also include:

- Trouble sleeping when your baby is sleeping (more than the lack of sleep new moms usually experience!)
- Feeling numb or disconnected from your baby
- Having scary or negative thoughts about the baby, like thinking someone will take your baby away or hurt your baby
- Worrying that you will hurt your baby even though you never would
- Feeling guilty about not being a good mom, or ashamed that you cannot care for your baby

THAT SOUNDS LIKE ME. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Depression is common. If you are worried about the way you have been feeling, **it is important to speak with a doctor and tell them about your concerns.** Your doctor can help you figure out if you have depression or not, and they will help you find the best treatment. Many women feel this way, you are not alone. There are treatments to help you feel better. Talk to your doctor so you can feel like yourself again!

IF I DON'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR DEPRESSION, WILL IT EVENTUALLY GO AWAY ON ITS OWN?

The best way to deal with depression is to see a doctor or a counselor. The earlier you seek help, the better you and your baby will do. When left untreated, depression can hurt the mother and her baby. Mothers who are depressed often have a hard time adjusting to their new roles and attaching emotionally to their babies. Babies of depressed mothers are often fussier and have more difficulties later in life—things like doing well in school, relating to others, and adjusting to new situations. It is possible that the depression could eventually go away without any help. However, it could take a long time and might cause a lot of extra problems for the mother and the baby. It could also get worse, instead of better.

Depression is treatable, but not if you don't seek help. Talk to your doctor today.

IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU MAY HAVE POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION PLEASE CALL: TOLL FREE 1-866-273-3835

The information in this fact sheet was developed by:



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