

Postpartum Depression: The most common medical complication of pregnancy/childbirth¹⁻⁶



Postpartum depression, or PPD, is a **major depressive episode** that can occur during pregnancy or after giving birth, and may negatively impact maternal, birth and infant outcomes.⁷⁻⁹

PPD may have devastating consequences for the mother, and may negatively impact: **relationships with a partner | that partner's mental health | the infant's physical, mental and emotional development.**^{7, 8, 10-15}

While the exact cause of PPD is unknown, a number of potential acute and chronic risk factors have been established, **including history of depression, hormonal fluctuations and chronic stress.**¹⁶⁻¹⁹



In the U.S., estimates of new mothers identified with PPD each year vary by state from 8% to 20%, with an overall average of 11.5%.¹

Studies have shown that for low-income women and women of color, rates are significantly higher. Past history of depression or anxiety can increase the risk of PPD.²⁰⁻²²

The symptoms & onset of PPD vary^{9, 22-24}

ONSET:

Expert opinions vary as to the timing of PPD onset. It is thought that PPD can begin during pregnancy or following childbirth, from within four weeks up to one year postpartum.

COMMON SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:



Feeling sad, hopeless, empty, overwhelmed, worried or overly anxious



Avoiding friends or family



Losing interest in activities that are usually enjoyable



Having trouble bonding with your baby



Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby

PPD often goes undiagnosed

Women receive medical care from a complex network of clinicians during the perinatal period, including primary care physicians, obstetrician-gynecologists (OB-GYNs), midwives, other specialists and advanced practice clinicians.²⁵



Yet, current estimates show that approximately half of PPD cases may go undiagnosed without screening.²⁶⁻³³

Feelings of reluctance, shame, embarrassment, judgment or fear may prevent new mothers or their partners from seeking help. PPD is a medical condition, not a personal failure.³⁴⁻³⁷

Many leading medical organizations and government agencies recommend screening at least once during pregnancy and the postpartum period for all mothers.^{23,36-37}

For more information, visit www.SeePPD.com.

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