



Reproductive Health

[Reproductive Health Home](#)

Depression Among Women

Depression and postpartum depression are common and treatable. If you think you have depression or postpartum depression, seek treatment from your health care provider as soon as possible.

Depression

Everyone feels sad sometimes, but these feelings usually pass within a few days. Depression interferes with daily life and may last for weeks or months at a time. Most people, even those with the most severe forms of depression, can get better with [treatment](#).

Postpartum Depression

Postpartum depression is depression that occurs after having a baby. Feelings of postpartum depression are more intense and last longer than those of “baby blues,” a term used to describe the worry, sadness, and tiredness many women experience after having a baby. “Baby blues” symptoms typically resolve on their own within a few days.

How Many Women Experience Depression and Postpartum Depression?

Depression is a common and serious illness. A [CDC study](#) shows that about 1 in 10 women in the United States reported symptoms that suggest they experienced an episode of major depression in the last year. Using the [Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System \(PRAMS\)](#), [CDC research](#) shows about 1 in 8 women with a recent live birth experience symptoms of postpartum depression. Estimates of the number of women affected by postpartum depression differ by age, race/ethnicity, and state. View your state’s prevalence of postpartum depressive symptoms using [PRAMS](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected mental health. Many people are experiencing grief and facing challenges that can be stressful and overwhelming. To find information about taking care of your mental health and coping with stress and grief, visit [Stress and Coping](#).

Symptoms of Depression

Depression doesn’t feel the same for everyone. How often symptoms occur, how long they last, and how intense they may feel can be different for each person.



Identifying Maternal Depression

Vitalsigns™
Identifying Maternal Depression
Missed opportunities to support moms

1 in 8 1 in 8 women report symptoms of depression after giving birth.

20% About 1 in 5 women were not asked about depression during a prenatal visit.

50% Over half of pregnant women with depression were not treated.

Overview:
Pregnancy can be an exciting time in a woman's life, but it can also bring challenges. Many women experience the baby blues after giving birth, and some women develop symptoms of depression that are more intense, long-lasting, and can interfere with daily activities.

Mothers with depression feel sad, hopeless, and have little interest in doing things they once enjoyed.

- Postpartum depression, which can last months or years after giving birth, can affect a mother's ability to bond with and care for her baby.
- If left untreated, it can impact the mother's health and may cause sleeping, eating, and behavioral problems for the baby.
- When maternal depression is effectively treated and managed, it benefits both mother and child.

PROBLEM:
Healthcare providers are missing opportunities to ask women about depression.

- About 1 in 5 women were not asked about symptoms of depression during a prenatal visit, and 1 in 8 were not asked during a postpartum visit.
- Whether healthcare providers ask pregnant and postpartum women about depression varies from state to state.
- * States range from 51% to 91% of women asked during a prenatal visit and 51% to 90% of women asked during a postpartum visit.

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Symptoms of depression can include:

- Lasting sad, anxious, or “empty” mood.
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism.
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness.
- Feelings of irritability or restlessness.
- Loss of interest in hobbies and activities.
- Loss of energy.
- Problems concentrating, recalling details, and making decisions.
- Difficulty falling asleep or sleeping too much.
- Overeating or loss of appetite.
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts.
- Aches or pains that do not get better with treatment.

Symptoms of Postpartum Depression

How often postpartum depression symptoms occur, how long they last, and how intense they feel can be different for each person. The symptoms of postpartum depression are similar to symptoms for depression, but may also include:

- Crying more often than usual.
- Feelings of anger.
- Withdrawing from loved ones.
- Feeling numb or disconnected from your baby.
- Worrying that you will hurt the baby.
- Feeling guilty about not being a good mom or doubting your ability to care for the baby.

Risk Factors for Depression or Postpartum Depression

Experiences that may put some women at a higher risk for depression can include

- Stressful life events.
- Low social support.
- Previous history of depression.
- Family history of depression.
- Difficulty getting pregnant.
- Being a mom to multiples, like twins or triplets.
- Being a teen mom.
- Preterm (before 37 weeks) labor and delivery.
- Pregnancy and birth complications.

Postpartum depression can also occur among women with a healthy pregnancy and birth.

How Depression Affects Fathers

Some fathers also report symptoms of depression. To better understand the experiences of fathers, PRAMS implemented a PRAMS for Dads pilot project. The [pilot project](#) in Georgia found 1 in 10 fathers reported depressive symptoms since the birth of their new baby. Studies such as PRAMS for Dads can help quantify men’s health behaviors and service needs.

Treatment

Depression is treatable, and most people get better with treatment. If you think you may be depressed, the first step to seeking treatment is to talk to your health care provider. You can ask your health care provider for a referral to a mental health professional or visit CDC's [Resources](#) to find help in your area. See CDC's [depression treatment](#) to learn about seeking treatment for depression.

Last Reviewed: May 22, 2023