

The Baby Blues and Postpartum Depression

After giving birth to a new baby it is understandable for the mother to feel a mix of emotions.

Some mothers feel excited from the first day, whereas others experience a jumbled happy and anxious feeling; still others may feel overwhelmed and doubtful. These conflicting feelings are called the “baby blues” and are very common among mothers who have recently given birth.

Some mothers start feeling these “baby blues,” up to ten days after delivery. Other women do not feel depressed until several weeks or months later. The birth may take more or less time than the mother expects, causing her to experience distress. She may feel like mourning over the birth because her body has lost something to which had grown attached. Since there are a lot of people (doctors, nurses, aides and family members) involved with the birthing process, the mother may feel detached from her baby. She may feel depressed because she cannot relate to the baby as easily or feel as comfortable and knowledgeable as she feels she should. The baby who has come into existence may be entirely different from the one the mother had expected. Her old self is changing, her hormones are changing, and her life is changing.

If symptoms are severe or last longer than ten days, then it is possible that the mother has postpartum depression.

Symptoms of Postpartum Depression:

- Sluggishness, fatigue, exhaustion
- Sadness
- Hopelessness
- Appetite disturbances
- Sleep deprivation
- Poor concentration, confusion
- Memory loss
- Undue concern for the baby
- Uncontrollable crying, irritability
- Lack of interest in the baby
- Fear of hurting oneself or the baby
- Exaggerated high and low feelings
- Lack of interest in sex
- Lack of interest in appearance

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, contact your doctor. It is important to realize that your life has dramatically changed because of your newborn. Take an adequate amount of time to adjust to your new life and do not be afraid to ask for help. There are support groups, home care programs, and medications which can aid women with postpartum depression.