

# Postpartum Depression



Postpartum depression includes a range of mental disorders. This can appear in mothers soon after delivery. The birth of a baby is a welcoming event. Having a baby brings about hormonal changes in the mother, and has an influence on her personal and social life.

## The 'baby blues'

Many mothers may experience a mild depression. The 'baby blues' may take place hours or days after giving birth. This is very common as hormones change following birth. This may go away on its own in just a few weeks. Some days you may cry, feel sad or helpless. You may have anxiety or feel irritable and have a hard time sleeping.

## Postpartum depression

Postpartum depression is distinct from the 'baby blues'. It is more serious and affects between 10%-20% of women. This may appear anytime within the first six months following delivery. With the highest level of

occurrence between 4-6 weeks post delivery.

Sometimes the new mother puts off seeking medical help because of lack of energy caused by the illness or fear of what others will think. The new mother may feel guilty about being depressed when she is supposed to be happy. Family members and physicians may also fail to recognize the symptoms as depression, believing instead that the mother's mood is a normal reaction to the stress of caring for the infant.

## Symptoms of postpartum depression can include:

- ✦ uncontrollable crying
- ✦ persistent sadness
- ✦ feelings of inadequacy or guilt
- ✦ loss of appetite
- ✦ insomnia (not due to baby's night wakings)
- ✦ irritability
- ✦ moodiness
- ✦ anxiety or panic attacks
- ✦ difficulty concentrating
- ✦ lack of interest in the baby

## Help Yourself

First, call your doctor. He can prescribe medications that will help you feel better. Second, please complete the enclosed Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale and return it to ValueOptions.

If you would like to learn more about Postpartum Depression or if you would like to be screened for depression, call ValueOptions at 1-800-322-4824, extension 2114.

