



# SPEAK UP WHEN YOU'RE DOWN

## 6 THINGS

Every New Mom & Mom-To-Be Should  
Know About Maternal Depression

### 1 | MATERNAL DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY IS COMMON.

It is the number one complication of pregnancy. In the US, 15% to 20% of new moms, or about 1 million women, each year experience perinatal mood and anxiety disorders. Some studies suggest that number may be even higher.

#### YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Maternal depression can affect any woman regardless of age, income, culture, or education.

### 2 | YOU MIGHT EXPERIENCE SOME OF THESE SYMPTOMS.

- Feelings of sadness or anger.
- Mood swings: highs and lows, feeling overwhelmed.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Lack of interest in things you used to enjoy.
- Changes in sleeping and eating habits.
- Panic attacks, nervousness, and anxiety.
- Excessive worry about your baby.
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby.
- Fearing that you can't take care of your baby.
- Feelings of guilt and inadequacy.
- Difficulty accepting motherhood.
- Irrational thinking; seeing or hearing things that are not there.

Some of the ways women describe their feelings include:

*I want to cry all the time.  
I feel like I'm on an emotional roller coaster.  
I will never feel like myself again.  
I don't think my baby likes me.  
Everything feels like a huge effort.*

### 3 | SYMPTOMS CAN APPEAR ANY TIME DURING PREGNANCY, AND UP TO THE CHILD'S FIRST YEAR.

Baby blues, a normal adjustment period after birth, usually lasts from 2 to 3 weeks. If you have any of the listed symptoms that have stayed the same or gotten worse, and lasted more than 5 weeks, then you may be experiencing maternal depression or anxiety.

### 4 | YOU DID NOTHING TO CAUSE THIS.

You are not a weak or bad person. You have a common, treatable illness. Research shows that there are a variety of risk factors that may impact how you are feeling, including your medical history, how your body processes certain hormones, the level of stress you are experiencing, and how much help you have with your baby. What we do know is, **THIS IS NOT YOUR FAULT.**

### 5 | THE SOONER YOU GET HELP, THE BETTER.

You deserve to be healthy, and your baby needs a healthy mom in order to thrive. Don't wait to reach out. Talk to someone you trust. **HELP** is available.

If you are having thoughts of harming yourself or baby, call 911 immediately.

### 6 | THERE IS HELP FOR YOU.

Postpartum Support International  
1.800.944.4773  
[www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)



Adapted from Postpartum Progress, [www.postpartumprogress.com](http://www.postpartumprogress.com), where you can find out more on childbirth-related mental illness. This brochure is also available in Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese.

[www.maternalmentalhealthnow.org](http://www.maternalmentalhealthnow.org)

