



Breastfeeding tips & techniques:

Breastfeeding and Postpartum Depression



Moms may not be aware that their emotional health can affect their success with breastfeeding. As a new mother, you might be feeling a range of emotions. It is very normal to feel tired and unhappy when you first get home with your new baby. These feelings can last up to two weeks and will go away on their own. If your feelings continue or get worse, and don't go away, you may need help. Some women feel sad or unhappy even weeks or months after they give birth.

About 10% – 15% of moms are affected by postpartum depression. They no longer enjoy normal activities. They find it hard to experience pleasure. Moms who are affected with postpartum depression may not enjoy caring for their babies, or any activities they may have liked before the baby was born. They may be crying a lot, feeling panic, or having disturbing thoughts. If you think you have any symptoms of postpartum depression, you are not alone and this can be treated. The first thing to do is to contact your doctor. It is best to seek help early rather than later.

Signs of postpartum depression

Mothers with postpartum depression may have some or all of these symptoms:

- ... History of depression or anxiety
- ... Feeling sad, anxious, afraid, or helpless
- ... Major life changes (such as abuse, divorce, or death)
- ... Unsupportive spouse or partner
- ... Financial concerns
- ... Inability to sleep (insomnia)
- ... Mood swings or irritability
- ... Chronic pain or headaches
- ... Unexpected event during the pregnancy or birth
- ... Short maternity leave or returning to work
- ... Concerns with baby's health
- ... Inability to breastfeed
- ... Fussy or colicky baby
- ... Loss of appetite

Need
breastfeeding
advice or help?

continued »

It is OK to **ASK** for help:

CALL your doctor or pediatrician » **CONTACT** a lactation consultant » **VISIT** www.postpartum.net » **REFER** to the numerous resources listed at www.abbottnutrition.com/breastfeeding

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- ... Loss of interest in or heightened worry about taking care of your baby
- ... Feeling like you are not the kind of mom you want to be
- ... Disturbing thoughts about hurting yourself or your baby

Treatment

Treatment of postpartum depression usually involves counseling and taking an anti-depressant medication. Most medications taken for postpartum depression can be taken while breastfeeding. Be sure to let your doctor know that you are breastfeeding.

Sometimes help with physical symptoms and finding ways to get more sleep will help with postpartum depression. Your doctor will determine what treatment, if any, is needed. Remember that postpartum depression is a real condition and help is available.

Try these self-help suggestions while being treated by your doctor:

- ... Get more sleep
- ... Share the baby's care with family, the baby's father, friends, and other care providers
- ... Get help with other children, meal preparation and chores
- ... Exercise every day (take walks with baby)
- ... Eat nutritious meals and snacks
- ... Sleep while baby is resting
- ... Consider joining a support group
- ... Call friends and family for moral support

Postpartum psychosis

These symptoms do not occur often. If you experience any of the following, contact your doctor right away.

- ... Not sure about what is real and what is not
- ... Seeing and hearing things that are not there
- ... Thoughts about hurting yourself or your baby
- ... Thoughts about suicide or homicide

