

# SPEAK UP WHEN YOU'RE DOWN

## 6 THINGS

EVERY NEW MOM & MOM-TO-BE  
SHOULD KNOW ABOUT  
PERINATAL DEPRESSION



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE  
[LACountyPerinatalMentalHealth.org](http://LACountyPerinatalMentalHealth.org)

For referrals and resources, call 211  
or  
1.800.944.4773 | [www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)  
or contact your healthcare provider

1

*Perinatal depression is common.*

It is, in fact, 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, and some studies suggest that number may be even higher.

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**

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

2

*You may experience some of these symptoms*

- Feelings of sadness.
- 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 an 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, they have stayed the same or gotten

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worse, and you're 5 to 6 weeks postpartum, then you are no longer experiencing baby blues, and may have a perinatal mood or anxiety disorder.

4

*You did nothing to cause this.*

You are not a weak or bad person. You have a common, treatable illness. Research shows 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 treatment, the better.*

Recent studies show that your baby's well-being and development are directly tied to your physical and emotional health. You deserve to be healthy, and your baby needs a healthy mom in order to thrive. Don't wait to reach out for **HELP**. It is available.

6

*There is help for you.*

There comes a time in every woman's life when she needs help. **NOW** is the time to reach out to a caring professional, who is knowledgeable about perinatal depression, and who can help you through this time of crisis. He or she can understand the pain you are experiencing and guide you on the road to recovery. Contact Postpartum Support International, [1.800.944.4773](tel:1.800.944.4773) or [www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net), for referrals and support near you.



Los Angeles Community Child Abuse Councils  
[www.lachildabusecouncils.org](http://www.lachildabusecouncils.org)



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