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Six Things to Know about Maternal Depression



1 Maternal depression is quite common.

- Up to **1 in 7 new moms** has some sort of pregnancy-related mood or anxiety disorder.
- Maternal depression can affect any pregnant woman or new mom, **regardless of age, income, race, ethnicity or education.**



2 There are many possible symptoms.

Symptoms vary from person to person. These may include:

- Feeling sad
- Feeling overwhelmed or anxious
- Feeling guilty or inadequate
- Mood swings – highs and lows
- Not enjoying things that used to be enjoyable
- Changes in sleeping and eating habits
- Excessive worrying about the baby
- Hallucinations – seeing or hearing things that aren't there
- Thoughts of harming self or the baby
- Thoughts of suicide

More intense feelings, like hallucinations, thoughts of harming yourself or the baby, or suicide, are signs of a **serious emergency**. If you or a loved one have these thoughts, call 911.



3 Symptoms can appear any time during pregnancy and up to a year after delivery.

- Prenatal depression happens during pregnancy.
- The “baby blues” typically happen shortly after delivery, and can last up to a couple of weeks.
- Postpartum depression happens after delivery. It can last several weeks. **Without treatment**, postpartum depression can get **worse over time.**



4 Maternal depression is not your fault.

- Maternal depression is **common** and **treatable**.
- Your medical history and your body's reaction to stress or hormones can cause maternal depression.
- Friends, family, and co-workers can provide **support** for you and your baby and help you through maternal depression.



5 Getting treatment sooner is better.

- Your physical and emotional health affect your **baby's health and development**.
- Treatment options include **therapy** (talking with a trained professional) and various **medicines** (including medicine that is safe during pregnancy or while breastfeeding).
- In addition to therapy and medicine, some women find that **support groups, meditation, physical activity, and healthy eating** can help them cope with stress and reduce symptoms of maternal depression.



6 Help is available.

- If you have thoughts of harming yourself or your baby, or if you are hallucinating, this is a medical emergency. Call 9-1-1.
- Asking for help is a sign of **strength**, not weakness.
- Start by talking with your health care provider or OB/GYN. They can connect you with trained professionals to **help get you through what you are feeling**.
- Check out additional resources for more ways to get help.



**Department
of Health**

For more information on maternal depression, visit www.health.ny.gov/ppd or call the NYS Growing Up Healthy Hotline at **1-800-522-5006**.