



# Could you be struggling with postpartum depression or anxiety?

When you welcome a new baby into your home, it's natural to sometimes feel worried, overwhelmed, stressed and other strong emotions, especially in the first week or two. But if these feelings and thoughts are making it difficult for you to care for your child, then there may be more going on.

Globally, about 10% of pregnant women and 13% of women who have just given birth experience a mental health disorder, primarily depression.<sup>1</sup> Postpartum anxiety is also common. In up to 50% of cases, depression and anxiety happen together.<sup>2</sup>

Maternal mental health disorders are treatable. They also are common and can affect virtually any woman. They tend to be due to hormone-level changes, lack of sleep and increased stress during pregnancy and after giving birth. In fact, medical experts around the world recommend women be screened for them as part of routine care after childbirth. Screening usually involves answering a short set of questions about your moods and thoughts.

## Signs to consider

Here are the common symptoms of postpartum depression and anxiety. Check any that sound familiar to your situation:

- Crying more often than usual
- Feeling angry, irritable, restless or tense
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Feeling numb and not interested in your baby
- Feeling like you are losing your mind
- Severely doubting your ability to be a good parent
- Having thoughts about hurting yourself or the baby
- Fear and worry taking over your thinking
- Increased heart rate, headaches, chest pains, nausea
- Not being able to sleep
- Checking on the baby continually

If you are experiencing some of those signs, it's best to check with your physician. They can evaluate you and, if need be, refer you to a mental health professional.

## Ask for help in any case

Whether or not you are struggling with a mental health concern, taking care of a baby is difficult. It's important to take care of yourself, too. Consider asking for help from people you trust to give you time to rest, relax and catch up.

Think about the things that will help you feel better – and ask. For example, maybe they could do a few chores for you, hold the baby so you can take a nap, or even sit with you so you can have some adult company? Even a little help can go a long way.



If you or someone you know is in crisis – seek safety and get help right away. If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.



To reach a trained crisis counselor, call the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (previously known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) at **988** or **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**. You may also text **988** or chat at **988lifeline.org**. The Lifeline provides 24/7 free and confidential support.\*

### Sources:

\*The Lifeline provides live crisis center phone services in English and Spanish and uses Language Line Solutions to provide translation services in over 250 other languages for people who call 988.

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. Maternal mental health. Accessed December 28, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Perinatal Excellence. Postnatal anxiety. Accessed December 28, 2023.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Depression among women. Accessed December 28, 2023.

MedlinePlus. Postpartum depression screening. Accessed December 28, 2023.

Mind. Postnatal depression and perinatal mental health. Accessed December 28, 2023.

NHS. Symptoms – Postnatal depression. Accessed December 28, 2023.

Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health. Universal Screening for Maternal Mental Health Disorders. Accessed December 28, 2023.

### optum.com

Optum is a registered trademark of Optum, Inc. in the U.S. and other jurisdictions. All other brand or product names are the property of their respective owners. Because we are continuously improving our products and services, Optum reserves the right to change specifications without prior notice. Optum is an equal opportunity employer.

© 2024 Optum, Inc. All rights reserved.

WF12560493 314370-012024