

## Support & Counseling for:

- ◆ Postpartum depression or anxiety
- ◆ Postpartum stress syndrome
- ◆ Postpartum obsessive-compulsive disorder
- ◆ Depression or anxiety during pregnancy
- ◆ Miscarriage, newborn loss, termination, stillbirth
- ◆ Complications related to pregnancy & birth
- ◆ Infertility issues
- ◆ Premenstrual dysphoric disorder
- ◆ Post adoption depression
- ◆ Reproductive health challenges
- ◆ Neonatal intensive care support
- ◆ Exploration of women's issues including: self-esteem, intimacy, sexuality & transition to motherhood
- ◆ Grief and bereavement

### Treatment Services:

- ✓ **Diagnostic assessment**
- ✓ **Referral for psychiatric evaluation and follow-up**
- ✓ **Individual & couple therapy**
- ✓ **Support Groups**
- ✓ **Screening for postpartum depression**
- ✓ **Pregnancy and postpartum preparation and monitoring for women at risk for emotional illness**
- ✓ **Information and support services for fathers**
- ✓ **Educational materials and multidisciplinary self-help program**

# The Postpartum Stress Center

Support  
Education  
Counseling

*Specializing in the treatment of postpartum depression and mood & anxiety disorders related to pregnancy and childbirth*

“A woman is most at risk for emotional illness during and after pregnancy than at any other time in her life.”

610.525.7527

[www.postpartumstress.com](http://www.postpartumstress.com)

# Aren't you tired of pretending you feel fine?

It can be exhausting to keep up appearances when you are feeling depleted and depressed. And when you have a baby to take care of on top of that, life can feel unmanageable and out of control.

Women who experience depression after childbirth may believe this is just what being a mother must feel like. They may think something is wrong, but not know exactly what. Or they may think that postpartum depression is something that happens to other women, those who are not as strong or to women that are not attached to their babies.

Postpartum depression (PPD) is much more common than people think and can occur anytime during the first postpartum year. One out of every 7 women who gives birth experiences symptoms of a clinical depression that requires treatment. Postpartum depression can range from mild to severe and results from a combination of biological (your brain and body), genetic (your family history), psychological (your personality and make-up) and environmental (external stressors) factors in your life.

Many women make the mistake of waiting too long in the hopes that things will get better on their own. Postponing treatment can lead to harder-to-treat symptoms and a lingering illness. PPD responds well to treatment which typically includes anti-depressant medication and talk therapy.

If you are worried about the way you are feeling, tell someone. Talk to your partner. Talk to your doctor. Do not let feelings of shame or embarrassment get in the way. Do what you need to do to help yourself heal so you can feel like yourself again.

## Symptom Checklist

Understanding the symptoms of postpartum depression can help you understand that this is a real medical illness, not something that you are making up or something that is happening because you are not a good mother. The symptoms are real and require attention from a healthcare practitioner that understands and treats women and depression.

Review the following list of symptoms and check all that apply. Do not be surprised if you check many or most. This is very typical for women who are experiencing symptoms after childbirth. This is not an indication of how severe your depression is but it will help you determine whether you should bring your concerns to your doctor's attention.

- I am worried about the way I am feeling
- I am tired all the time
- I feel nervous much of the time
- I'm not eating as much as I usually do
- I cannot sleep even when the baby is sleeping
- My mind races with thoughts and worries
- I am unable to focus or concentrate
- I am having thoughts that are scaring me
- I am afraid to tell anyone how bad I am really feeling
- I am more irritable than usual
- I cry more often than I usually do
- Sometimes I think it would be better if I were not here
- I feel so guilty about the way I am feeling
- The way I am feeling is interfering with my ability to function day to day
- I am experiencing physical problems like headaches, stomach aches, dizziness, unexplained pains
- I am having anxiety attacks
- I am afraid to be alone
- I am worried that I might be overattached or not attached enough with my baby
- I wonder if I will ever feel better

## Risk Factors

Risk factors do not cause postpartum depression but they can increase the likelihood of experiencing it. Being aware of risk factors will help you understand what you are feeling and enable you to protect yourself in the future.

- ◆ I have a history of depression
- ◆ I have a history of Postpartum depression
- ◆ My family has a history of depression or anxiety
- ◆ I experienced feelings of depression during my pregnancy
- ◆ I have a history of severe PMS
- ◆ I have experienced suicidal thoughts or have considered doing something to hurt myself in my past
- ◆ I do not have a strong support system to help me if I need it
- ◆ I have a history of drug or alcohol abuse
- ◆ People have told me I'm a perfectionist
- ◆ I do not have strong social support
- ◆ My marriage is not stable

## Tips for talking with your doctor

- 1) Choose the doctor you are most comfortable with, whether it's your Obstetrician, Pediatrician or Family doctor.
- 2) Get information about PPD.
- 3) Make sure your doctor knows how bad you are feeling especially if your feelings are scaring you.
- 4) Do not let your fears of what they will think stop you from saying what you need to say.
- 5) Ask your doctor to check your thyroid functioning and do a complete blood count
- 6) If your doctor suggests antidepressant medication, make sure and take the time to ask all your questions so you completely understand what you are taking and why.
- 7) Ask for a referral to a good therapist who can help support you during this difficult transition.
- 8) If for ANY reason, you feel your concerns are being minimized, or not taken seriously or judged or casually disregarded, you may not in the right place.
- 9) If it would be helpful, ask your partner or a friend to accompany you for further support.
- 10) Remember that even though it's hard to do when you are feeling bad, YOU need to advocate for your best health care.

For more information on postpartum depression and treatment options:

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