

A woman with curly hair is kissing a baby on the cheek. The baby is wearing a blue and white checkered shirt. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor scene with a blue sky and green trees. The text is overlaid on the image.

# Postpartum Depression:

## Signs, Symptoms, and How to Get Help.

### Depression is common in new moms.

Having a baby can be a stressful experience, no matter how much you love your child or have looked forward to becoming a parent. Considering the loss of sleep, intense new responsibilities, and having no time for yourself, it's no surprise that many new moms feel like they're on an emotional rollercoaster. In fact, mild depression and mood swings are so common in new mothers that it has its own name: **The Baby Blues.**

### Is it the baby blues or postpartum depression?

The majority of women experience at least some symptoms of the baby blues immediately after childbirth. The sudden change in hormones after delivery, plus stress, isolation, no sleep, and fatigue, can cause strong feelings, even sadness. You may feel more tearful, unprepared, and emotionally fragile than normal. Generally, these feelings start in the first couple of days after delivery, peak after one week, and then begin to fade by the end of the second week postpartum.

The baby blues are perfectly normal, but if your symptoms don't go away after a few weeks or get worse, you may be suffering from postpartum depression. **You may need to ask for help, and that is perfectly normal.** You are not alone. Help is available.

## Signs and symptoms of postpartum depression

In the beginning, postpartum depression can look like the normal baby blues. In fact, postpartum depression and the baby blues share many symptoms, including mood swings, excessive crying, sadness, insomnia, and irritability. The difference is that with postpartum depression, the symptoms are more severe and may even include suicidal thoughts or the inability to care for your baby. Unlike the baby blues, postpartum depression is a serious problem—one that you shouldn't ignore. Here are a few signs and symptoms of postpartum depression to be aware of:

- You avoid your partner or push them away.
- You feel unable to emotionally connect with or feel close to your baby.
- Your anxiety is out of control, which prevents you from eating well or sleeping, even when your baby is asleep.
- You experience powerful feelings of guilt or worthlessness or begin to be preoccupied with thoughts of dying or even wish you were not alive.

**If you think you may have postpartum depression, or if your partner or family members are worried that you do, contact your OB/GYN or another health care professional as soon as possible and make an appointment to see them. DO NOT WAIT until your postpartum checkup. The sooner you call, the sooner you can get help.**

**For an urgent problem related to postpartum depression, call right away for free, 24/7 help:**

- **National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline 988**
- **Community First Health Plans Behavioral Health Hotline 1-877-221-2226**

## Case Management

Community First offers Case Management services to help Members suffering from postpartum depression and other complex and chronic conditions. Case Management services include:

- Help getting the care you need quickly
- Help coordinating care between doctors and other health care providers
- Help understanding your condition and treatment

As a reminder, Community First Members can make an appointment with any network Behavioral Health Services Provider without a referral.

If you would like to learn more about Case Management or need help finding a provider, call 210-358-6050.