

What Helps?

Some women with postpartum emotional disorder recover without incident. Many others need professional help. A woman experiencing any of the symptoms can call our **Support Line at (805) 541-3367** for free confidential information and referrals.

All the symptoms, from the mildest to the most severe are temporary and treatable. Treatment varies, depending on the severity of symptoms.

The treatment plan may include medical evaluation, counseling, medication, and participation in a support group. Most important, a woman shouldn't try to get through this alone.

Postpartum emotional problems are physical and real. A woman can not "pull herself out of it" any more than she can pull herself out of a heart attack.



The San Luis Obispo County Child Abuse Prevention Council (SLOCAP) and ALPHA Pregnancy & Parenting Support oversee the Support Line. Thanks to the generous support of First 5 of San Luis Obispo County, we are able to meet the needs of distressed postpartum mothers and families. Our mission is to work in our local community to promote physical and mental health for mothers, children, and families.

To learn more about ALPHA and Postpartum Depression please call the Support Line:

(805) 541-3367

Major funding provided by:



For help contact our support line at
(805) 541-3367

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You are not alone.
You are not to blame.
You will get better.
There is help!

*Pregnancy
&
Postpartum
Depression*

The Baby Blues

The **“Baby Blues”** is a mild, temporary condition experienced by as many as **80%** of new mothers within the first few days after childbirth. In spite of careful planning, the sense of responsibility and the reality of caring for a new baby does not really hit most parents until the first few days at home.

Due to a sudden drop in hormones, a woman may feel weepy, exhausted, anxious, or tense. If these feelings seem overwhelming, or continue past the first two weeks, a woman should seek help from a caring professional.

What can you do to ease the “Baby Blues”?

Sleep - Take time out for naps. Sleep when given the opportunity.

Eat - Have small, nutritious, and easy to prepare meals throughout the day.

Support - Talk with non-judgmental friends or family who allow you to express your feelings. Ask for help, accept help. Let someone else do the cooking and cleaning.

Make time - for yourself



Postpartum Depression

True postpartum depression is different from the baby blues. **One of every six women experiences postpartum depression and/or anxiety.** There are many factors that can contribute, including: hormonal changes after birth, a fussy baby, a history of depression, a history of physical or emotional abuse, a poor support system or a difficult relationship. Symptoms may include:

- Feeling sad day after day*
- No energy to care for self or baby*
- Feelings of hopelessness*
- Crying for no apparent reason*

- Anxiety*
- Eating problems*
- Frightening thoughts or fantasies*
- Feeling that something is not right*

Depression may occur during pregnancy, immediately after birth or many months later. The longer a depression goes undiagnosed and untreated, the more impact it has on the woman and her family. Postpartum depression often leaves women feeling ashamed, isolated and with overwhelming feelings of guilt.

Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety is a common symptom among all postpartum disorders. Specific anxiety disorder can develop or worsen after childbirth.

Panic disorder may include many or some of the following symptoms:

- Sudden increase in anxiety*
- Palpitations and chest pains*
- Hot or cold flashes*
- Difficulty breathing*
- Shaking, dizziness*
- Fear of losing control or going crazy*

Postpartum obsessive compulsive disorders may include the following symptoms:

- Strong physical sensation (i.e. butterflies)*
- Repetitive, intrusive or repulsive thoughts*
- Thoughts of harming self or baby*
- Avoiding the baby*
- Compulsive behaviors such as:*
 - Hand washing, Checking and rechecking, Counting or touching, Housecleaning*

Anti-depressant medications often help with the symptoms of postpartum depression and anxiety disorders. Some may be taken while breastfeeding.

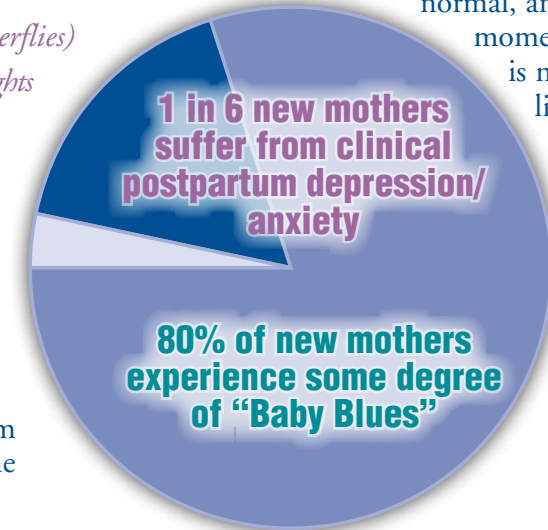
Postpartum Psychosis

One to two of every thousand women will experience a more serious disorder known as postpartum psychosis. Symptoms include:

- Severe or rapid mood swings*
- Agitation or hyperactivity*
- Irrational thoughts*
- Incoherent statements*
- Hallucinations*
- Inability to care for self or baby*
- Thoughts of harming self or baby*
- Losing touch with reality*
- Delirium or mania*

The mother's condition can change rapidly. One moment things seem normal, and the next moment the mother is not acting like herself.

Postpartum psychosis is truly an emergency and requires immediate care.



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