Depression Among Women

Depression

Everyone feels sad sometimes, but these feelings usually pass within a few days. Depression interferes with daily life and may last for weeks or months at a time. Most people, even those with the most severe forms of depression, can get better with treatment.

Postpartum Depression

Postpartum depression is depression that occurs after having a baby. Feelings of postpartum depression are more intense and last longer than those of “baby blues,” a term used to describe the worry, sadness, and tiredness many women experience after having a baby. “Baby blues” symptoms typically resolve on their own within a few days.

How Many Women Experience Depression?

Depression is a common and serious illness. A CDC study shows that about one out of 10 women in the United States experience symptoms of depression. Using the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), CDC research shows that nationally, about 1 in 9 women experience symptoms of postpartum depression. Estimates of the number of women affected by postpartum depression differ by age and race/ethnicity. Additionally, postpartum depression estimates vary by state, and can be as high as 1 in 5 women. View your state’s prevalence of postpartum depression using PRAMStat, an online data platform from PRAMS.

Symptoms of Depression
Depression doesn't feel the same for everyone. How often symptoms occur, how long they last, and how intense they may feel can be different for each person.

Symptoms of depression can include:

- Lasting sad, anxious, or “empty” mood.
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism.
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness.
- Feelings of irritability or restlessness.
- Loss of interest in hobbies and activities.
- Loss of energy.
- Problems concentrating, recalling details, and making decisions.
- Difficulty falling asleep or sleeping too much.
- Overeating or loss of appetite.
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts.
- Aches or pains that do not get better with treatment.

Symptoms of Postpartum Depression

How often postpartum depression symptoms occur, how long they last, and how intense they feel can be different for each person. The symptoms of postpartum depression are similar to symptoms for depression, but may also include:

- Crying more often than usual.
- Feelings of anger.
- Withdrawing from loved ones.
- Feeling numb or disconnected from your baby.
- Worrying that you will hurt the baby.
- Feeling guilty about not being a good mom or doubting your ability to care for the baby.

Risk Factors for Depression

Experiences that may put some women at a higher risk for depression can include:

- Stressful live events.
- Low social support.
- Previous history of depression.
- Family history of depression.
- Difficulty getting pregnant.
- Being a mom to multiples, like twins, or triplets.
- Being a teen mom.
- Preterm (before 37 weeks) labor and delivery.
- Pregnancy and birth complications.
- Having a baby who has been hospitalized.

Depression can also occur among women with a healthy pregnancy and birth.

Treatment
Depression is treatable and most people get better with treatment. If you think you may be depressed, the first step to seeking treatment is to talk to your health care provider. You can ask your health care provider for a referral to a mental health professional or visit CDC’s Resources to find help in your area. See CDC’s depression treatment to learn about seeking treatment for depression.

How Depression Affects Fathers

According to a 2010 study using data from 1993 to 2007, approximately 4% of fathers experience depression in the first year after their child’s birth. By a child’s 12th birthday, about 1 out of 5 fathers will have experienced one or more episodes of depression. Younger fathers, those with a history of depression, and those experiencing difficulties affording items such as a home or car were most likely to experience depression.

Get Email Updates

To receive email updates about this page, enter your email address:

What's this? (http://www.cdc.gov/emailupdates/)

Submit

More Related Links

Mental Health
Treating for Two (http://www.cdc.gov/pregnancy/meds/treatingfortwo/)
NCHS Fastat
PRAMS Data

For The Media

9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
(404) 639-3286
After hours
(404) 639-2888
Contact Media (http://www.cdc.gov/media/subtopic/contact.htm)