

Feeling a Little “Down” When You Should be overjoyed

After all you're a new mother. There doesn't appear to be anything physically wrong with you, yet you don't feel like your old self.

Childbirth has caused your body to go through a tremendous change. Hormones which were used while you were carrying your baby are no longer needed after birth. The adjustment which the body makes in lowering these hormone levels can cause you to feel out of sorts and somewhat depressed. The mildest form of this depression “the baby blues” occurs within 2 - 5 days after birth. It is believed to occur in 40% to 80% of women and is considered normal. Symptoms include a depressed mood, irritability, anxiety, confusion, crying and sleep/ appetite disturbances. With reassuring support and care you and your baby will be fine.

Postpartum depression is a much more serious condition. It can occur within weeks after childbirth as is marked by the following symptoms:

-
- Anxiety, depression, or uneasiness
 - Loss of interest in usually pleasurable activities
 - Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
 - Fatigue
 - Changes in appetite or sleep
 - Recurrent thoughts of death/suicide
 - Feelings of worthlessness or guilt, especially failure at motherhood
 - Excessive anxiety over child's health
-

Because of the harmful effects of postpartum depression on both mother and infant, it is important to tell your primary care physician if you are suffering from any of these symptoms. With the proper medical care, you will be back to feeling like yourself again and able to enjoy your new role as mother.

