

Emotional Changes After Giving Birth

After the birth of your baby, you may feel many emotions. It takes time to adjust to your body's changes and to your baby's needs. While these feelings can be normal, it is important to know when to get help.

“Baby Blues”

You may have the “baby blues” in the first 2 weeks after your baby is born. Most new moms have some of these feelings.

You may have one or more of these signs:

- Cry for no reason
- Go from being happy to sad quickly
- Are easily irritated
- Feel overwhelmed or anxious
- Are tired and have little energy

These feelings often get better as your body adjusts and you get used to caring for your baby. Here are some things you can do to help:

- Ask for and accept help.
- Rest or nap when your baby sleeps.
- Take a break and have someone care for your baby while you go out.
- Talk about your feelings with family and friends.
- Join an online or in-person new mothers' support group.
- Exercise if your doctor says it is okay.
- Care for yourself. Read, take a bath or watch a movie.
- Eat a healthy diet.

Postpartum Depression

Sometimes depression does not go away on its own. If feelings of depression or anxiety get worse or last longer than 2 weeks, call your health care provider.

Symptoms can start at any time within the first year of having a baby. Depression after pregnancy is common and can get better with treatment.

Getting treatment is important for you and your baby. Common treatments include counseling and medications. There are medications that are safe for moms who breastfeed.

Untreated depression can make it harder to care for and bond with your baby.

It is important to ask for help from a health care provider.

Symptoms will be different for each person, but it might include:

- Feelings of sadness, hopelessness or guilt
- A lack of interest about your baby (or excessive worry about baby)
- Trouble sleeping
- Excessive crying
- Anger or irritability
- Weight loss or gain
- Lack of energy

Danger Signs

You may have a more serious problem if you:

- Are not able to care for yourself or your baby
- Are afraid to be alone with your baby
- Have thoughts of hurting yourself or your baby

These are danger signs and you need to get help. Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.