



*Something's Not Right:*

*Your Feelings During and After Pregnancy*



INDIANA  
PERINATAL  
NETWORK



*Lead/Convene/Collaborate*  
FOR MOTHERS & BABIES

[www.indianaperinatal.org](http://www.indianaperinatal.org)

## Baby Blues

The “baby blues” are very common and can begin soon after birth.

50-80% of new moms will have feelings of sadness, anger, and nervousness. Some women have lots of ups and downs—like a roller coaster.

The “baby blues” usually go away in less than two to three weeks. Take good care of yourself. Ask for and accept help from others. The symptoms should get better with time. Let your health care provider know if the blues last more than two weeks or if you feel you are getting worse.



# Depression & Anxiety

Depression and anxiety are much worse than the “baby blues” and last longer. They can be treated with caring support, medication and by talking with a counselor. About one in seven women will have depression and anxiety during pregnancy, soon after pregnancy or any time in the year after birth.

No one knows for sure what causes depression and anxiety, but there are some factors that increase your risk. These include:

- a past history of depression
- anxiety or any other mental health issue
- an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy
- lack of support from loved ones.

Let your health care provider know if you experience any signs of depression or anxiety. Together, you can decide the best treatment to help you feel better.

Mothers expect to adjust easily to the birth of their new baby. But many mothers aren't ready for the emotions and feelings they may have before and after giving birth.

Depression and anxiety during and after pregnancy can include a wide range of feelings. It is the number one complication of pregnancy.

## Signs of Depression & Anxiety

- Crying
- Counting, cleaning or checking things
- Feeling anxious or worried
- Sleeping problems
- Feeling irritable or easily angered
- Loss of or change in appetite
- Odd or unusual thoughts
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Thoughts of hurting self or baby
- Feelings of guilt
- Headaches
- Sadness
- Lack of energy
- Loneliness
- Feeling speeded up
- Rapid mood swings
- Frightening thoughts
- Hopelessness



## *You Are Not Alone*

Depression and anxiety during and after pregnancy (sometimes called Postpartum Depression) can be treated. Let your health care provider know if you experience any of the signs mentioned. Together, you can decide the best treatment to help you feel better.

The tips in this booklet may help you cope with your feelings. Your doctor might also suggest medication to help you feel better. Let your doctor know if you plan to breastfeed your baby, so he or she can suggest medication that is okay for breastfeeding moms.



### **Remember This**

*You are not alone.*

*Depression and  
anxiety can be  
treated.*

# Taking Good Care of Yourself Helps You Care for Your Baby

## SLEEP

- Try to get a good night's sleep.
- Sleep when the baby sleeps. Limit your caffeine after 12 noon.
- If you smoke, stop smoking two to three hours before bedtime.

## EAT

- Eat good foods, like grains, fruits, vegetables, protein and dairy.
- Eat small amounts at a time, several times a day, if you have a poor appetite.
- Make sure you drink a quart of water a day.



Some women think . . .

*"My baby doesn't love me; I should put him up for adoption."*

*"I'm not a good mother."*

*"I just want to run away!"*

*"I'm afraid I might hurt my baby or myself."*

These thoughts could be a symptom of depression or anxiety.

## TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

- Try to take time every day just for you.
- Ask for and accept help from others. If you can, let someone else take care of the baby for a while. Take time away from the baby each day.
- Laugh and see the funny things in life.
- Exercise, even if it's just walking around the block.

## GET SUPPORT

- Talk about your thoughts and feelings with someone who cares about you. It's okay to cry.
- You may find support online, in a support group, at church or with family and friends.
- You might keep a journal or diary to help express your feelings.

### **Remember This**

*Every mother is different, but every mother needs support. If you or someone you know is experiencing depression or anxiety during or after pregnancy, help is available.*



# How Does My Mood Affect My Baby?

**If you are depressed or anxious, you:**

- May have trouble taking care of your baby's basic needs.
- May have trouble bonding or "falling in love" with your baby.
- May not have the energy to talk, sing or play with your baby.



## A Message for Dad, Family & Friends

- Help mom get time for herself by caring for the baby and other children, and preparing meals.
- Ask for help from family and friends.
- Let mom talk about her feelings.
- Encourage her to get help or get it for her if she is not getting better. Don't wait!

# *Getting Help*

**Get professional help from a health care provider who knows about treating depression during and after pregnancy.**

**For more information, call the**

**Indiana Family Helpline  
800.433.0746**

# Resources

*Please check with your local hospital for resources.*

## HELPFUL WEBSITES

- **Postpartum Support International (PSI):**  
[www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net), 800.944.4PPD (773)
- **Indiana Perinatal Network:**  
[www.indianaperinatal.org](http://www.indianaperinatal.org)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Beyond the Blues: A Guide to Understanding & Treating Prenatal & Postpartum Depression*—S. Bennett and P. Indman, 2006
- *The Mother-to-Mother Postpartum Depression Support Book*—S. Poulin, 2006
- *The Postpartum Husband*—K. Kleiman, 2001
- *Pregnancy Blues: What Every Woman Needs to Know about Depression During Pregnancy*—S. Misri, 2006
- *This Isn't What I Expected: Overcoming Postpartum Depression*—Kleiman, K. & V. Raskin, 1994



*You are not alone.  
You can get help . . .*

*The mission of the Indiana Perinatal Network (IPN) is to lead Indiana to improve the health of all mothers and babies.*

*We bring about change by:*

- Providing professional and consumer education*
- Developing and replicating model programs, and*
- Promoting sound public policies*

*What makes us unique is our proven ability to bring together competing health systems, diverse disciplines, and public and private organizations to reach consensus on how to address complex issues affecting the health of women, infants and children in our state.*

*Visit [indianaperinatal.org/Mothers and Families](http://indianaperinatal.org/Mothers and Families) tab to find out more.*



*Division  
of Maternal  
and Child  
Health*