



# UNDERSTANDING POST-PARTUM DEPRESSION AND SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH

APRIL 2025




**Postpartum depression** is a persistent, intense feeling of sadness, anxiety and despair that occurs within 1 month after giving birth. Beware however that these feelings can start during pregnancy and continue post delivery or they can occur later post delivery. They persist for weeks to months, and are often accompanied by sleep disturbance, loss of energy, feelings of worthlessness and guilt and sometimes even suicidal thoughts.

It is different from and lasts longer than **Baby Blues** : feelings of worry, sadness, and tiredness that many women experience after birth that usually go away on their own after a few days



Welcoming a new baby brings immense joy to a mom's life, but it also comes with overwhelming emotions, which could lead to PPD.

While it may feel like it, the truth is; you are not alone. In New Jersey; between 11,000 and 16,000 women suffer from (PPD) each year(NJ Department of Health,2017). Know the signs and seek help !



If you or a loved one has signs that are persistent for two weeks, it may be more than “baby blues”:

When left untreated, PPD affects not only the mother but the baby’s development and health

**“Depression and anxiety will not go away on their own. With treatment, there is hope.”– National child & Maternal Health education Program**

**There are treatment options**

- counseling : talking to a mental health provider about your concerns and feelings can help you find coping strategies to ease depression
- Medication; Do not take any over the counter medications; talk to your doctor and they will prescribe effective medication that is safe to use during pregnancy and breastfeeding.



## Where to Turn for Support in New Jersey

New Jersey Mom2Mom Helpline offers Peer support by trained moms with lived experiences & counselors

☎ **Call 877-914-6662** – 8:30am – 8:00pm Monday–Friday, Afters hours you can leave them a message and they promise to call you back.

Call the NJ Family Healthline Monday–Friday 8AM – 6PM  
**1-800-328-3838**

**Call or text 988—or chat 988lifeline.org** for crisis support. Crisis support is available **24/7!**

Postpartum Support International (PSI) – New Jersey Chapter

**Call or Text their HelpLine 1-800-944-4773 (4PPD)**

**National Maternal Mental Health Hotline**

Call or Text 1-833-943-5746 (English and Spanish) – 24/7, Free, Confidential Hotline for Pregnant and New Moms. Interpreter Services are available in 60 languages.

## Consequences of untreated PPD



**Affects your ability to function and care for the newborn.**

**PPD could turn into chronic depression**

**Mothers have trouble bonding with the newborns and are at greater risk of neglecting or abusing the babies.**

**Increases the risk of unhealthy behaviors such as smoking and excessive drinking as well as dying by suicide.**

**INCORRECT**

### **Misconceptions about PPD**

1. Only first-time mothers get PPD
2. Only weak mothers get PPD
3. Mothers with PPD don't love their babies. The truth is the illness can make it hard to connect or care for them
4. If you ignore it, it will go away. The truth is PPD may worsen without treatment and increases risk of dying by suicide.

## What can we all do to help?

Be informed, know the signs and **stop** the stigma against mental health

**Be kind!** New moms are often under a lot of stress and need support.

Check in with friends who recently had a baby. Offer to babysit so they can have a moment of rest, ensure they eat food that will meet requirements of adequate nutrition for a nursing mom.

Encourage seeking help—**PPD is medical**

**Together we can normalize maternal mental health!!**



**To raise healthy babies and build strong families, we need more than just physically healthy mothers. We need to support holistic well-being: mental, physical, emotional, and social. Because a mother's health shapes the future of her child, her family, and her community**