

OVERCOMING POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION



A SELF-HELP GUIDE



Self reflecting questions on postpartum department

- How have my emotions changed since giving birth?
 - Do I feel connected to my baby, or do I feel distant or numb?
 - What thoughts do I have about myself as a parent?
 - Do I often feel like I'm not good enough or failing as a mother?
 - Have my sleeping or eating habits changed significantly since childbirth? Do I feel comfortable asking for help or expressing my needs?
 - Have I been withdrawing from my partner, friends, or family?
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THIS WORKBOOK AIMS TO HELP YOU TO:

- Recognise whether you may be experiencing problems of postpartum depression.
- Understand what postpartum depression is, what causes postpartum blues and what keeps it going.
- Find ways to understand, manage or overcome your postpartum depression.



2. Do I have postpartum depression?

Here's a breakdown of the feelings, physical traits, thinking patterns, and behavior patterns commonly associated with postpartum depression (PPD):

Please tick the boxes which regularly apply to you.



Feelings

- Persistent sadness or emptiness ☐
- Anxiety or panic without a clear cause ☐
- Guilt or shame (especially about not feeling happy after childbirth) ☐
- Feeling overwhelmed or hopeless ☐
- Low self-esteem or sense of worthlessness ☐



Physical symptoms

- Fatigue or low energy, even after resting ☐
- Changes in appetite (eating too much or too little) ☐
- Sleep disturbances (insomnia or excessive sleeping) ☐
- Body aches or pains without a medical cause ☐
- Sluggishness or restlessness ☐



Thinking patterns

- Negative self-talk ("I'm a bad mother" or "I can't do this") ☐
- Constant worry or irrational fears (especially about the baby's safety) ☐
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions ☐
- Ruminating on past mistakes or failures ☐



Behavioural patterns

- Withdrawal from social interactions ☐
 - Avoidance of baby care or over-attachment due to anxiety ☐
 - Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed ☐
 - Neglecting personal care or household responsibilities ☐
 - Crying spells or emotional outbursts ☐
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If you have ticked a number of these boxes you may be experiencing symptoms postpartum depression .

However don't be alarmed, this is very common and there are things you can do to improve your situation. You will find some useful strategies in this workbook.

3. What is Postpartum Depression?

Postpartum depression is a serious mood disorder that can affect women after childbirth. It involves intense feelings of sadness, anxiety, hopelessness, and fatigue that interfere with a mother's ability to care for herself or her baby.

It usually begins within the first few weeks after delivery, but it can also start months later.

Difference Between Baby Blues and Postpartum Depression:

Baby Blues	Postpartum Depression
• Occurs 2-14 days after childbirth • It is mild and manageable • Symptoms occurs such as mood swings and weeping • Usually don't need treatment	• Occurs last more than 2 weeks • It is intense and severe • Symptoms occurs such as sadness, guilt or depression • It requires profession help



3. Causes of Postpartum Depression

1. Hormonal Changes

- After childbirth, levels of estrogen and progesterone drop rapidly, which can trigger mood changes.
- Thyroid hormone levels may also decrease, leading to fatigue and depression-like symptoms.

2. Emotional Factors

- Feeling overwhelmed by the responsibility of a newborn.
- Fear of not being a good mother or struggling to adjust to the new role.
- Sleep deprivation, which affects mood and energy levels.
- Low self-esteem or body image issues after delivery.

3. Psychological History

- Personal or family history of depression, anxiety, or other mental health disorders.
- Previous experience of postpartum depression in earlier pregnancies.

4. Social and Environmental Factors

- Lack of support from partner, family, or friends.
- Relationship conflicts or single parenting.
- Stressful life events like job loss, financial problems, or moving.
- Unplanned or unwanted pregnancy.

5. Physical and Medical Factors

- Complications during childbirth (e.g., difficult labor, premature delivery, or C-section).
- Chronic health issues in the mother or baby.

4. Effects of Postpartum Depression?

1. Effects on the Mother

- Emotional distress: Constant sadness, anxiety, hopelessness
- Low self-esteem: Feeling like a failure as a mother
- Physical issues: Fatigue, poor sleep, changes in appetite
- Social withdrawal: Isolation from family and friends
- Difficulty bonding with the baby
- Reduced daily functioning: Trouble managing home, work, or baby care
- Suicidal thoughts or self-harm in severe cases

2. Effects on the Baby

- Poor bonding and attachment with the mother
- Delayed emotional and cognitive development
- Feeding and sleeping problems
- Increased risk of behavioral issues as the child grows
- Less verbal and emotional engagement from the mother

3. Effects on the Family

- Relationship strain between parents or with other family members
- Partner may develop depression or emotional distress
- Tension in household roles and responsibilities
- Financial stress if the mother cannot work or needs treatment

4. Effects of Postpartum Depression?

4. Long-Term Effects (if untreated)

- Chronic depression in the mother
- Attachment and trust issues in the child
- Academic and behavioral problems in later childhood
- Family dysfunction or long-term emotional distance



14-Day Recovery Activity Plan for Postpartum Depression

Day 1 Acknowledge and Accept

Goal: Begin your healing journey with honesty and self-compassion.

Activity: Set aside 15–20 minutes in a quiet space. Write down your thoughts and emotions in a journal without judging yourself.

Reflect: Accept that postpartum depression is not your fault—it's a medical condition, not a weakness.

Day 2 Reach Out for Professional Support

Goal: Take the first step toward receiving expert guidance.

Activity: Book an appointment with a psychologist, psychiatrist, or your gynecologist.

Online Option: Take a postpartum depression screening test (like the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale) to understand your symptoms.

Reminder: Seeking help is a strength, not a failure.

Day 3 Gentle Movement and Nature

Goal: Reconnect with your body and calm your mind.

Activity: Go outside for a 10–15 minute slow walk, even if it's just around your home.

Bonus: Try gentle stretches or yoga designed for postpartum recovery.

Mood Check: Take note of how your body feels before and after the walk.

14-Day Recovery Activity Plan for Postpartum Depression

Day 4 Nutrition and Hydration Check-In

Goal: Support your physical and mental energy.

Activity: Eat one nourishing meal today (vegetables, protein, whole grains).

Hydration: Drink at least 8–10 glasses of water. Keep a bottle nearby.

Prep Tip: Ask a partner or family member to help prep simple meals if needed.

Day 5 Bonding Time with Baby

Goal: Strengthen your emotional connection with your baby, even in small ways.

Activity: Spend 10–15 quiet minutes with your baby—look into their eyes, smile, sing softly, or gently touch their hands and face.

Journal Prompt: "What did I notice about my baby today?"

Day 6 Practicing Gratitude & Positivity

Goal: Train your mind to find small positives in tough days.

Activity: Write down 3 things you're grateful for—these can be tiny (e.g., a warm cup of tea, baby's smile, 10 minutes of quiet).

Watch/Listen: Choose a light, joyful video or uplifting podcast.

14-Day Recovery Activity Plan for Postpartum Depression

Day 7 Deep Rest & Letting Go

Goal: Reduce physical and mental exhaustion.

Activity: When the baby naps, you rest too—even if it's just lying down and doing nothing.

Delegate: Ask a loved one to take care of the baby for one hour so you can have uninterrupted rest. Let go of guilt—you deserve rest.

Day 8 Social Connection

Goal: Reduce isolation and build emotional support.

Activity: Reach out to a close friend, another mom, or family member for a casual conversation (call, video chat, or in-person).

Ask for support: “I just need someone to talk to. I’m feeling low.”

Day 9 Emotional Expression

Goal: Let out the emotions you’ve been holding in.

Activity: Write a letter to yourself about your postpartum experience so far—be raw and honest.

Creative outlet: If writing feels hard, try doodling, painting, or voice-recording your feelings. Let your emotions exist without self-blame.

14-Day Recovery Activity Plan for Postpartum Depression

Day 10 Set and Celebrate a Small Goal

Goal: Regain a sense of control and accomplishment.

Activity: Set one very small, doable goal for the day—like folding laundry, bathing peacefully, or preparing a simple dish.

After you do it, celebrate: “I did something for me today.”

Reminder: Small steps lead to big healing.

Day 11 Practice Self-Compassion

Goal: Replace self-criticism with kindness.

Activity: Stand in front of a mirror and say one kind thing to yourself:

“I’m trying, and that’s enough today.”

Write a self-compassion letter as if you're talking to a friend going through this.

Repeat affirmation: “I am not alone. I am doing my best.”

Day 12 Do One Meaningful Thing for You

Goal: Reconnect with your identity beyond motherhood.

Activity: Spend 15–20 minutes doing something you used to love: listening to music, reading, drawing, doing skincare, or watching a favorite show.

Ask for help to make space for this “you” time.

Reminder: You are still you, not just a mom.

14-Day Recovery Activity Plan for Postpartum Depression

Day 13 Relationship Check-In

Goal: Open up to your partner or loved ones about how you feel.

Activity: Have a gentle talk with your partner (or closest supporter) about your emotional needs.

Example: “I need more hugs,” “Please check in with me once a day,” “Help me with baby baths.”

Tip: Express feelings with "I" statements, not blame.

Day 14 Reflect and Plan Forward

Goal: Acknowledge progress and plan the next steps.

Activity: Journal or think about:

What helped me most in the last 14 days?

What was the hardest part?

What do I want to keep doing going forward?

Conclusion

Postpartum depression is a serious but treatable mental health condition that affects many new mothers after childbirth. It goes beyond the typical "baby blues" and can deeply impact a mother's emotional, physical, and social well-being, as well as her connection with her baby and family. Recognizing the signs early, seeking professional help, and building a supportive environment are crucial steps toward recovery. With compassion, care, and support, mothers can heal, reconnect, and thrive in their journey of motherhood.

"You are not alone, and this is not your fault. With support, you will find strength in the storm."💛