

e. Postpartum Blues and Depression

MODULE 8

The arrival of a new baby is usually a happy time for most women. However, this is not always true. New mothers may feel different emotions ranging from happiness to sadness.

Two or three days after giving birth, about 80% of women may feel:

- feel disappointed
- be sad and teary eyed
- be irritable
- feel overwhelmed and anxious
- feel fatigued and have difficulty sleeping
- experience mood swings
- be unable to concentrate

This is called *postpartum* or *baby blues*. These feelings usually go away within one to two weeks. However, about 10 percent of women go on to have **postpartum depression**.



Postpartum depression may begin within a few weeks after birth or at any time during your baby's first year.

Consult the following table to learn a few signs of postpartum depression.

SIGNS OF POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION	
A woman suffering from postpartum depression can feel	A woman suffering from postpartum depression can also
Sad	Eat too much or too little
Like weeping or crying a lot	Have an increase or decrease in appetite
Guilty	Have difficulty concentrating
Angry	Have low self-esteem
Exhausted	Have panic attacks
Anxious, irritable, and worried	Have scary fantasies
Overwhelmed, lonely, and helpless	Have thoughts of hurting herself
Oversensitive	Think about hurting her baby
Worthless and confused	Lose interest in things that used to bring pleasure
Like she is not her normal self	Lose self-confidence

If you have one or many of these symptoms, remember, you are not alone, and this is a treatable illness.



See your doctor immediately or go to the emergency room at the hospital if:

- You have scary fantasies;
- you have thoughts of hurting your baby or yourself.

If other feelings depression persist longer than two or three weeks, contact:

- your local family doctor or obstetrician.
- a Public Health nurse or Nurse Practitioner.
- Your local Public Health Clinic (www.gnb.ca/publichealth then click on Public Health Clinics).
- Distress Center: 613-238-3311.
- Family Services à la famille Ottawa (MOMs support group): 613-725-3601 ext 117.
- local mental health clinic, private counselor, psychologist or psychiatrist.



This video, created by the Best Start Resource Centre, introduces the topic of postpartum mood disorders. Life with a New Baby: [Dealing with Postpartum Mood Disorders](#) : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xA1l8kpdwsc>