

## What can you do to feel better?

- Don't blame yourself; you are not a "bad mother"
- Talk about your feelings with someone you trust
- It is OK to have some negative feelings about parenting
- Let your partner and/or family know how they can help you
- Try to rest when the baby sleeps
- Have healthy snacks and get help with meal preparation
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol
- Get out of the house every day for fresh air
- Be physically active every day
- Meet with other new mothers through a play group, parenting group or a group for women with postpartum depression (PPD) that feels comfortable for you
- Trust your feelings

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Postpartum depression is a common medical illness that is preventable and treatable. Seek support from family, friends and a health care professional

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## Where to get help?

- Your family doctor
- Your obstetrician or midwife
- A social worker at your hospital
- Ask for a medical referral to a psychiatrist
- Toronto Health Connection, public health nurse: 416-338-7600
- Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) 310-CCAC (2222) — (no area code required)

### Perinatal Support Services:

Parkdale Postpartum Support 416-537-8222  
Toronto Public Health 416-338-7600  
VHA Home Health Care 416-489-2500  
(Housekeeping, childcare, fee-for service agency ext. 4349)

### Postpartum Depression websites:

[www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)  
[www.toronto.ca/health/postpartumdepression](http://www.toronto.ca/health/postpartumdepression)

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You are not alone.  
There is help.  
You will get better.

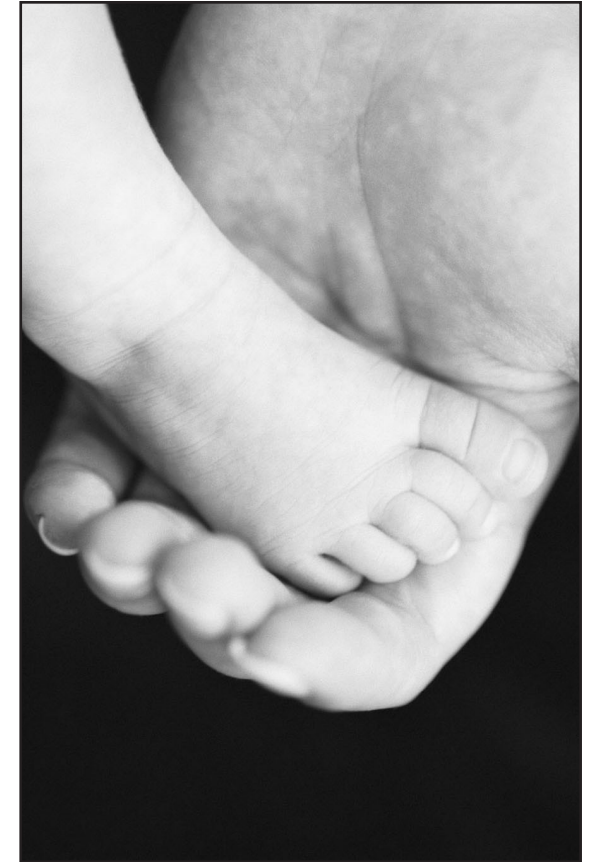
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**MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL**   
Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Health Complex

Perinatal Mental Health Program  
700 University Avenue, 3-200  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5G 1Z5  
t 416-586-4800 ext. 8325  
[www.mountsinai.ca](http://www.mountsinai.ca)

# Baby Blues and Beyond

## What Every Woman Needs to Know About Perinatal Mental Health Issues



**MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL**   
Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Health Complex  
Bright Minds. Big Hearts. The Best Medicine.

## Postpartum Mood Disorders

### Who is affected?

- 25 per cent of women experience depression
- 30-50 per cent of women with a history of depression will develop postpartum depression
- 10-16 per cent of new moms will develop postpartum depression
- 50-70 per cent will have a recurrence of postpartum depression with their next pregnancy

### Which women are most at risk?

Women with current active psychiatric symptoms, personal or family history of mental illness, stressful life events and lack of social support are most at risk.

## Depression during pregnancy

Depression may start in pregnancy and should be discussed with your caregiver. Early treatment can prevent or minimize postpartum depression.

Symptoms may include:

- Sadness or hopelessness
- Lack of interest/pleasure
- Anxiety or irritability
- Sleep and appetite changes

## Baby Blues

This starts within a few days of delivery and may last up to three weeks. Mothers may experience tearfulness, sadness, moodiness, irritability, worrying.

## Postpartum Depression (PPD)\*

PPD can start within four weeks and up to one year after birth.

Symptoms may include:

- Loss of pleasure/lack of interest
- Low energy/persistent fatigue
- Crying
- Feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Poor concentration, poor decision making
- Sleep and appetite changes
- Intense anxiety or agitation
- Irritability, anger
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Thoughts of harming self or baby

\*Early recognition and prompt treatment benefit both mother and baby

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Many woman will not be diagnosed or treated. Symptoms will be blamed on lack of sleep or demands of the new baby. Women stay silent because they feel guilt and shame.

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## Postpartum Psychosis

Postpartum psychosis is very rare and occurs in 1/1000 births. It usually occurs in the first few weeks after birth. Mothers feel confused and out of touch from reality. They may have intense thoughts about harming themselves or their baby.

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Postpartum psychosis requires prompt medical attention. See your care provider or visit an Emergency Department.

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### Is medication safe for me and my baby?

Medication may be a necessary part of the care plan. Many studies show evidence that medications can be safely used during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Call Motherisk Program for more info:

416-813-6780

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