

## *Post-partum Blues vs. Post-partum Depression*

### **WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?**

It is common for new moms to experience post-partum blues – also called the “baby blues” – in the days right after childbirth.

A new mother can have sudden mood swings, sadness, crying spells, loss of appetite, sleeping problems, and feel irritable, restless, anxious and lonely. For most women, these feelings generally occur in the first few weeks after delivery and go away soon, without the need for treatment.

However, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, about 10 percent of new moms experience **post-partum depression** – a more severe form of depression that can happen anytime within the first year after childbirth. Unlike the “baby blues,” post-partum depression does not go away quickly and depressive symptoms are often stronger, affecting a woman’s well-being and interfering with daily functioning.

### **Symptoms of post-partum depression**

The symptoms of post-partum depression may include the following:

- Depressed mood
- Negative feelings toward the baby
- Lack of pleasure in all or most activities
- Decreased appetite
- Fatigue
- Feeling withdrawn, socially isolated, or unconnected
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Agitation and irritability
- Trouble sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating or thinking
- Thoughts of death or suicide

**Note:** Professional help should be sought immediately if a person is experiencing suicidal thoughts.

### **When to seek medical advice**

Experiencing depression after childbirth isn’t a character flaw, weakness or something to feel ashamed of. Sometimes, it’s simply part of giving birth. If you’re feeling depressed after your baby’s birth, you may be reluctant or embarrassed to admit it. But it’s important to tell your doctor. Left untreated, the symptoms of post-partum depression can last for months or years, often get worse, and you may be at risk of harming yourself or your baby.

If several of the symptoms listed above have persisted for longer than two weeks, or if the symptoms are severe enough to interfere with your daily routine – including caring for your newborn or other children – make an appointment to see your primary care physician. Mention to him/her that you are concerned about depression. Your doctor can either start treatment or refer you to a psychiatrist or other healthcare professional for further evaluation and treatment.

### **Contact your EAP**

If you suspect that you or a family member may be suffering from depression, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals or information. EAP counselors are specially trained to help you get the right kind of help for depression. We’re here to help you.

**Simply call 1-800-342-8111.**

