

## **Depression During Pregnancy and Postpartum**

Pregnancy and the postpartum period are times of great change – physically, hormonally, emotionally, and socially. While pregnancy and birth are joyful occasions, they are also times of increased stress, which puts women at higher risk for depression.

Depression affects 10-20% of all women in pregnancy and postpartum. It can begin before the baby is born or develop months after the baby arrives. Any woman can develop depression during pregnancy or postpartum.

### **The Blues – a normal part of adjusting to pregnancy and parenting**

Having emotional ups and downs, and being overwhelmed and upset from time to time, is normal and common for most pregnant women and new mothers.

After delivery, a majority of women will develop postpartum blues within the first two days to two weeks. Many women find that talking to family and friends (including other new mothers), taking time to care for themselves, and getting more rest and help with childcare duties, will help them feel better.

### **Depression – more than just The Blues**

Women who are depressed suffer from a variety of the following symptoms every day for two weeks or more:

- Feeling worthless or guilt
- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Anxiety or panic attacks
- Dislike or fear of touching the baby
- Feeling overwhelmed or unable to take care of your baby
- Trouble sleeping
- Low energy, difficulty getting out of bed
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities

### **Depression is bad for you and your baby's health**

Besides being very difficult for women and their families, maternal depression can interfere with babies' intellectual and emotional development.

### **Depression is an illness that is treatable**

Untreated depression can last for months or years, but there are many good treatment options available. Treatment can include individual therapy, group support and/or education, and medication. Many antidepressant medications can be taken during pregnancy and while you breastfeed.

If you feel you may be suffering from depression or if you just want to talk about what resources are available, call and make an appointment with your provider.

## **Resources**

***Presbyterian Behavioral Health Outpatient Therapy Program:*** (505)291-5300

***March of Dimes:*** Depression During Pregnancy:  
[http://www.marchofdimes.com/pnhec/188\\_15663.asp](http://www.marchofdimes.com/pnhec/188_15663.asp)

***Depression After Delivery:*** (800)944-4PPD  
[www.depressionafterdelivery.com](http://www.depressionafterdelivery.com)

***Postpartum Support International:*** (805)967-7636  
[www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)

***Parents Helping Parents Support Group***  
University of New Mexico – free for everyone  
Group meets every other Tuesday from 6:00-7:30pm  
Please contact Felicia Mancini at: (505)272-6387

***Postpartum Education for Parents (PEP):*** (805)564-3888 (warm line)  
<http://www.sbpep.org/>