

Perinatal Mood & Anxiety Disorders



Find out if what you are
experiencing is "normal!"



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If you recently had a baby and are feeling completely and utterly overwhelmed, you may be wondering:

"Am I crazy?"

"Is this normal?"

"Do I suck at being a mom?"

"Will I ever feel like myself again?"

The answers are
No, Yes, No, and Yes!

1 in approx. 6 women experiences a perinatal mood or anxiety disorder during pregnancy or following childbirth and over 86% are undiagnosed!

Most people are familiar with the term "*postpartum depression*," which has often been used as an umbrella term for any mental health struggle following pregnancy. But depression is just one of *many* perinatal mood and anxiety disorders that can occur.

I want to help you make sense of what you are experiencing so you know what's normal and can determine when to get help. Below, I list the various disorders associated with pregnancy and childbirth. Next, we'll look at common symptoms and risk factors.

Perinatal Mood & Anxiety Disorders (PMADS) include:

- Perinatal Depression
- Perinatal Bipolar Disorder
- Perinatal Anxiety
- Perinatal Obsessive=Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Perinatal Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Perinatal Psychosis

Common Symptoms of PMADs Include

- Depression or gloomy mood
- Anxiety or feeling utterly overwhelmed
- Anger, irritability, or lack of patience
- Confusion, difficulty making decisions, or brain fog
- Preoccupation or obsessions regarding the baby or your own health
- Need to be constantly productive or feeling unmotivated to do anything at all
- Guilt over everything
- Feelings of powerlessness or hopelessness
- Fear of never feeling like yourself again
- Fear you are going crazy
- Feeling out of control
- Feeling that no one understands
- Feeling scared and disconnected
- Feeling like a bad mother
- Fear that something might happen to your baby
- Feeling that each day is so long, with no end in sight
- Feeling alone
- Feeling tired and completely drained
- Wondering if maybe you should never have had a baby

Risk factors

Anyone can develop a PMAD, but the following risk factors increase your chances:

- Personal or family history of a mental health disorder
- Complicated or difficult pregnancy
- History of infertility, difficulty conceiving, prior abortion, miscarriages, or pregnancy loss
- History of thyroid disease or diabetes
- Chronic sleep deprivation
- Unwanted or unplanned pregnancy
- Traumatic or disappointing delivery or birthing experience
- Breastfeeding complications or abrupt weaning from breastfeeding
- Difficult temperament of baby
- Major life stressors such as a recent move, job change/loss, marital problems, divorce, childcare issues, or death of a loved one
- Lack of social support from partner, family, and/or friends
- History of physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse
- Multiple children under the age of 5
- Health issues with yourself or baby

When to Get Help

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms above and/or identify with one or more of the risk factors, you may be wondering whether you need to get help.

The first thing to consider is how many weeks postpartum are you and how long have you been experiencing symptoms?

The "baby blues" is common, occurring in 60-80% of moms. It starts approximately 3-5 days after the baby is born and lasts just 2 days-2 weeks. It can include tearfulness, feeling overwhelmed or uncertain, and fatigue...but the predominant mood is happy.

When symptoms are more severe, last more than two weeks, or occur a week or more after delivery, we're likely looking at a PMAD.

PMADs are easily treatable with the right kind of help. Treatment includes education, psychotherapy, and possibly medication. Look for a professional who specializes in perinatal mental health issues (visit postpartum.net for a local directory) or talk to your OBGYN for referrals.

Remember:

You are not alone.

You are not to blame.

And with help you will be well!

If you or your partner are experiencing symptoms of a Perinatal Mood or Anxiety disorder, please get in touch!

I would love to point you in the right direction of getting support and feeling like yourself again!

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Hi! I'm Megan MacCutcheon.

I'm a licensed professional counselor, a certified perinatal mental health clinician, and a successful author. I specialize in working with individuals struggling with issues related to identity, self-esteem, trauma, and anxiety.

Let's Connect!



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