



## Risk Factors for Postpartum Mood Disorders

Postpartum mood disorders (PPMD) is the term used to describe four emotional conditions occurring in the first year after giving birth. These four conditions include anxiety and panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, postpartum depression and post traumatic stress disorder. About 20% of women will have PPMD following birth and they may experience one or more of these conditions. PPMD usually occurs within two months of giving birth though it may occur anytime in the first year following childbirth.

These factors increase a woman's risk of having a postpartum mood disorder:

- History or presence of emotional problems, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, or depression in self or immediate family member.
- Traumatic pregnancy or childbirth experience.
- Recent major stresses - miscarriage(s), death in the family, a move, change or loss of job, marriage, separation or divorce.
- Unsupportive spouse or partner or no partner.
- Lack of supportive friends or family.
- History of severe premenstrual symptoms such as depression, irritability, anger.
- History of physical, emotional or sexual abuse.
- History of substance abuse or living with someone who abuses drugs or alcohol
- Past history of or current eating disorder.
- Unplanned and unwanted pregnancy.
- Low self esteem.
- Poor or absent mother-daughter relationship.
- Financial pressures.
- High expectations of yourself with a personal need to be "perfect" and "in control".
- Having a "high need" infant or an infant with a chronic medical condition.
- History of infertility.
- Thyroid disease.
- Excessive sleep deprivation

For more information, see [www.wpcan.wa.gov/ppd](http://www.wpcan.wa.gov/ppd). If you need someone to talk to about these issues: call 1-888-404-7763 for Postpartum Support International.

For more information on pregnancy, birth, and postpartum  
See our books: *Pregnancy, Childbirth & the Newborn* or *The Simple Guide to Having a Baby*.  
Take a childbirth preparation class at Great Starts, or in your local community.

For parenting tips, information for families, or to talk to someone about parenting:  
**In Washington State:** Call the Family Help Line at 1-800-932-HOPE  
**Outside of WA:** contact your local Circle of Parents agency at [www.circleofparents.org](http://www.circleofparents.org)

© Excerpt from *Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Newborn*, 2001  
By Great Starts, a program of Parent Trust for Washington Children.  
1601 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave, Suite 410 • Seattle, WA 98101 • (206) 233-0156 • [www.parenttrust.org](http://www.parenttrust.org)