



maternal mental health

Hoag Hospital is committed to providing comprehensive maternity care and education. As part of that commitment, Hoag's Maternal Mental Health Program is designed to identify patients with various mental health conditions and guide them to support services. At Hoag, we provide timely screening, connection to treatment, and education to patients and clinicians.



What is post-partum depression and how is it different from the “baby blues”?

The “baby blues” represents a brief period of time following birth when a woman may feel more sensitive, tearful or overwhelmed. Most women experience this for about two weeks after delivery. The post-partum blues is a normal period of adjustment and it gets better on its own. However, 15-20% of mothers may go on to experience a more serious and more prolonged form of the blues call maternal depression.

Maternal depression is also known as “post-partum depression.” The term, “post-partum depression” tends to be misused to describe any mental health challenge related to pregnancy. However, it is important to know that depression can occur at any time before, during or after pregnancy and that other mental health challenges deserve the same level of attention. Anxiety for example is also common and can have similar consequences.

Signs you may be struggling with a maternal mental health condition

Symptoms of post-partum depression or anxiety include:

- Loss of interest or pleasure in life
- Loss of appetite
- Less energy and motivation
- Difficulty sleeping or staying asleep
- Increased crying or tearfulness
- Feeling worthless or hopeless
- Feelings of not being a good mother
- Feelings of disinterest or being overprotective toward the baby
- Having thoughts of hurting yourself or your baby
- Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge
- Not being able to stop or control worrying
- Trouble relaxing
- Being so restless that it is hard to sit still
- Becoming easily annoyed or irritable
- Feeling afraid, as if something awful might happen
- Having intrusive or frightening thoughts

What causes post-partum depression?

There is no single cause for post-partum depression. Physical, emotional and lifestyle factors may all play a role. Each is explained below:

Physical changes

After childbirth, there are many physical changes, including a dramatic drop in estrogen and progesterone levels. The hormones produced by the thyroid gland also may drop, which can leave women feeling tired, sluggish and depressed. Changes in blood volume, blood pressure, the immune system and metabolism can lead to fatigue, mood swings and depression.

Emotional factors

When an individual is sleep deprived or overwhelmed, any number of emotional factors can contribute to post-partum depression. For example, you may be anxious about caring for a newborn, or you may be overwhelmed with a new sense of identity as a mother.

Lifestyle influence

Lifestyle changes with a new baby can contribute to post-partum depression, which can also be attributed to difficulty breastfeeding, changes in routines, financial problems or any number of personal pressures.



Risk Factors

Post-partum depression can develop after the birth of any child, not just the first. The risk increases if:

- You have a history depression
- You had post-partum depression after previous pregnancy
- You have experienced stressful events during the past year, including illness, job loss or pregnancy complication
- You are experiencing marital conflict
- You have a limited support system
- The pregnancy is unplanned or unwanted
- The risk of post-partum psychosis is higher for women who have bipolar disorder

When to Seek Medical Advice?

If you are feeling depressed or anxious during or after pregnancy, you may be reluctant to speak with someone. However, it is extremely important to tell your physician. If the signs and symptoms of depression or anxiety do not fade after a couple of weeks, or if they are severe enough to interfere with your ability to complete everyday tasks, call your physician. The earlier you seek treatment, the speedier your recovery will be. If at any time you experience life-threatening thoughts or behaviors, seek medical treatment immediately.

Treatments

There are several treatment choices available to pregnant and breastfeeding women. These include lifestyle modifications, counseling also known as psychotherapy and medications. The decision regarding treatment is complex and very personal. It takes a careful look at the known risks of untreated depression against the risks and benefits of treatment.

Screening at Hoag

The Maternal Mental Health Program has designed a protocol for all women receiving perinatal health care at Hoag. This program not only provides screening services to identify early detection of maternal mental health conditions, but also helps to ensure that women get the services and support they need to recover. The Maternal Mental Health Program also works with Hoag affiliated physicians to screen and assist women in accessing appropriate resources.

Hoag Maternal Mental Health Program

To support women in our community who are struggling with mental health challenges throughout pregnancy and the post-partum period, and women suffering from perinatal loss, the Maternal Mental Health Program is committed to screening, treatment, connection, education and outreach.



Hoag Maternal Mental Health Clinic

Services at the clinic are provided by a psychiatrist, a licensed marriage and family therapist, a licensed clinical social worker and a care coordinator. Services provided include:

- Preconception planning (women with existing mental health conditions or who are already taking medications and are planning to conceive)
- Mental health assessment during pregnancy and post-partum
- Individual psychotherapy
- Group psychotherapy
- Medication safety evaluation during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Connection to support services

Who can be referred?

Women who are currently pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or up to one year post-partum.

Clinic Information

Hours: Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Location:

Hoag for Her Center for Wellness
500 Superior Ave, Suite 315,
Newport Beach

Appointments: 949-764-8191

Maternal Mental Health Support Line: 949-764-8191 (if you would like more information about available resources)

Insurance: we accept all major insurances that contract with Hoag

Support Groups for new moms

Hoag offers free weekly support groups facilitated by licensed therapists for women who can expect a safe setting to talk openly about their experiences, particularly for women experiencing the baby blues or post-partum depression. These ongoing support groups focus on teaching positive coping skills and providing support and education.

Evening group: Monday evenings from 6pm to 7pm

Daytime group: Wednesday mornings from 11am to 12pm

Location:

Hoag for Her Center for Wellness
500 Superior Ave, Suite 315
Newport Beach, CA 92663

Babies and support persons are welcome.

For details, please call the Maternal Mental Health Support Line at **949-764-8191**.

For more resources, please see: www.hoag.org/maternal-mental-health

Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Screen (EPDS)

Please check the answer that comes closest to how you have felt **in the past 7 days**, not just how you feel today.

Question 1

In the past week I have been able to laugh and see the funny side of things:

- A. As much as I always could
- B. Not quite so much now
- C. Definitely not so much now
- D. Not at all

Question 2

In the past week I have looked forward with enjoyment to things:

- A. As much as I ever did
- B. Rather less than I used to
- C. Definitely less than I used to
- D. Hardly at all

Question 3

In the past week I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong:

- A. Yes, most of the time
- B. Yes, some of the time
- C. Not very often
- D. No, never

Question 4

In the past week I have been anxious or worried for no good reason:

- A. No, not at all
- B. Hardly ever
- C. Yes, sometimes
- D. Yes, very often

Question 5

In the last week I have felt scared or panicky for no very good reason:

- A. Yes, quite a lot
- B. Yes, sometimes
- C. No, not much
- D. No, not at all

Question 6

In the past week things have been getting on top of me:

- A. Yes, most of the time I haven't been able to cope at all
- B. Yes, sometimes I haven't been coping as well as usual
- C. No, most of the time I have coped quite well
- D. No, I have been coping as well as ever

Question 7

In the past week I have been so unhappy that I have difficulty sleeping:

- A. Yes, most of the time
- B. Yes, sometimes
- C. Not very often
- D. No, not at all

Question 8

In the past week I have felt sad or miserable:

- A. Yes, most of the time
- B. Yes, quite often
- C. Not very often
- D. No, not at all

Question 9

In the past week I have been so unhappy that I have been crying:

- A. Yes, most of the time
- B. Yes, quite often
- C. Only occasionally
- D. No, never

Question 10

In the past week the thought of harming myself has occurred to me:

- A. Yes, quite often
- B. Sometimes
- C. Hardly ever
- D. Never

Scoring: Questions 1, 2, & 4 are scored 0, 1, 2, or 3 with top box scored as 0 and bottom box scored as 3. Question 3, 5-10 are reversed scored, with the top box scored as a 3 and the bottom box scored as 0. If your total score is 10 or greater, please discuss this with your physician as soon as possible. **If you answered "yes" to question #10, go to the emergency department or call 911.**