

## FOR FATHERS:

### WHEN YOUR PARTNER HAS A PPM

"It's like an alien abduction."

You may feel very frustrated and confused and wonder if your partner will ever be the same again. Men have their own experience around postpartum mood disorders that is very different from what women go through. Some common feelings fathers may have are:

- worry /frustration: "I wondered just what was I going to do. I had no clue."
- anger: "I felt like she wasn't doing her share."
- overwhelmed: "I had the responsibility of being the mother and the father."
- concern: "I want her back. Will she ever be well?"

Although this may be a difficult time for you, you are also in the perfect position to help your partner get the help she needs.

### Advice for Fathers

- Understand that this is not her fault and she is not making up these symptoms.
- Be patient and encouraging.
- Tell her you love her and recognize that she is doing her best.
- Learn all you can about postpartum mood disorders and help her find professionals who will understand her issues and give her the support she needs.
- Know that she will be well.



## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### Self-Help

Women who have a mild form of postpartum mood disorder may find some relief by trying some of the following ideas:

- Find someone to care for the baby so you can sleep.
- Get some mild to moderate exercise each day.
- Eat nutritious, balanced meals to give you energy.
- Talk about your experiences with someone you trust.
- Take some time just for you each day.
- Give yourself permission to do less and allow others to help you.
- Give yourself credit for all that you do each day!

### When Self-Help is not Enough

If your symptoms do not get better or they start to interfere with your daily life, please contact Postpartum Support International. Trained volunteers who have "been there" are ready to offer support and provide resources.

### Postpartum Support International (PSI)

#### Arizona Warmline:

(888) 434-MOMS(6667)

AZ Website: [www.postpartumcouples.com](http://www.postpartumcouples.com)

Website: [www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)



APWC in partnership  
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South Phoenix  
Healthy Start

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## "What Every New Parent Should Know"



## PERINATAL MOOD DISORDERS

## ARIZONA POSTPARTUM WELLNESS COALITION

### MISSION STATEMENT:

The Arizona Postpartum Wellness Coalition (APWC) is dedicated to improving the pregnancy and postpartum experience for Arizona families through providing support for families and professionals, increasing awareness of the serious nature of perinatal mood disorders, and improving access to available screening methods, treatment options and resources in Arizona.



## WHAT IS A POSTPARTUM MOOD DISORDER?

"My baby was sleeping. My partner was sleeping. I was sobbing."

Having a baby is typically viewed as a happy time in a family's life. However, many women experience emotional changes after childbirth that can have a serious effect on the entire family. Emotional changes are the result of many factors, including changes in hormones, the physical stress of labor and delivery, not getting enough sleep, and the demands of caring for a newborn. There are 5 kinds of postpartum mood disorders.

### Baby Blues

75-80% of new moms will experience the Baby Blues. It is described as mild depression mixed with happier feelings, or as some women state, "It is an emotional roller coaster." The Blues usually begin 2-3 days after birth and symptoms may include:

- tiredness
- inability to sleep
- feelings of sadness
- crying spells
- feeling overwhelmed
- inability to cope
- feelings of loneliness
- feeling nervous/anxious



### Postpartum Depression

If the Baby Blues last more than two weeks or if symptoms of the Blues become worse, you are most likely experiencing Postpartum Depression (PPD). 10-20% of women will experience PPD. Symptoms include those in the Baby Blues as well as:

- anger, fear, and/or feelings of guilt
- thoughts of inadequacy as a person/parent
- hard time concentrating/ making decisions
- appetite changes
- feeling disconnected from the baby
- possible suicidal thoughts

### Postpartum Panic Disorder

Postpartum Panic Disorder is a form of anxiety that occurs in up to 10% of new moms.

Symptoms include:

- feeling very nervous
- recurring panic attacks (shortness of breath, chest pain, heart palpitations)
- many worries or fears



### Postpartum Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

3-5% of mothers will experience Postpartum OCD.

Symptoms include:

- obsessions (persistent thoughts or mental images about the baby)
- compulsions (doing things over and over to reduce the fears and obsessions)
- a sense of horror about obsessions

Mothers know their thoughts are bizarre and are very unlikely to ever act on them.

### Postpartum Psychosis

Occurs in 1-2 of every 1,000 births. It usually starts within the first two weeks-three months and symptoms include sudden psychotic symptoms like:

- delusions (strange beliefs) and/or hallucinations
- feeling very irritated, hyperactive, and unable to sleep.
- mood changes with poor decisions

There is a 10% rate of suicide/ infanticide associated with this disorder. Treatment is needed immediately.

### TREATMENT OPTIONS

There are several treatments for postpartum mood disorders. The most common of these are:

- Postpartum support groups
- Individual or Couples Therapy
- In some cases, medication

Postpartum Psychosis requires immediate hospitalization in order to stabilize and protect the woman and her baby.

