

The treatment of postpartum depression

[Health & Medicine](#), [Mental Health](#)



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What Is Postpartum Depression?

Depression is a mental illness effecting behavior as well as thinking and function. It can happen at any time during life and to any one regardless of age, upbringing, sex, race, or spirituality. Postpartum depression is depression that occurs after a baby is born and differs from the baby blues most women experience after birth. Baby blues occur in most women following the birth of her baby, the difference between postpartum depression and baby blues is the severity and length of time.

The increase in hormones before and during pregnancy are a factor in postpartum depression. Hormones from the thyroid, which grows to 135% of its pre-pregnancy size, as well as both estrogen and progesterone are increased during pregnancy. After birthing these hormones drop back to what they were before pregnancy, this change is a lot like to what happens before the menstrual cycle, but more severe (Office on women's Health, 2018). Prognosis is dependent on if the woman seeks help. The earlier help is looked for, the sooner treatment and assistance can be given to a suffering mother and prevent other complications after baby is born.

Treatment

Treatment is often determined based off signs and symptoms that are presented. For example, there are medications that can be utilized to treat hormone imbalances as well as thyroid issues related to the decrease in hormones of a woman suffering from postpartum depression. Medications are not the only treatment. There is also therapy and preventative methods such as offering assistance so the mother can take a break or rest is beneficial to the mother's mental health. The office on women's health also lists talk therapy which is beneficial for expressing feeling of inadequacy, stress, anger, guilt, and trouble connecting with baby.

Expected lab pertaining to the diagnosis is looking at hormone levels in comparison with normal levels. If there is a huge gap in hormone levels, supplementation can be done. This is generally completed by a blood test that checks for these levels as well as a depression screen (Mayo Clinic, 2019). Based off of these results, the doctor or physician can decide what steps to take next to better treat they symptoms presented.

The Importance of Follow Ups

The patient should be sure to set regular follow ups to be sure that the treatment is working as intended. In certain cases, visits will be more frequent due to the severity and ongoing assessments. Every mom is different, every coping mechanism and reaction to birth is different. Any signs of a depressive disorder should be monitored closely, especially throughout pregnancy. The number one priority for health care professionals is to be sure that both mom and baby are safe.

When we teach our postpartum mom, her spouse and family the signs and differences between the baby blues in comparison to postpartum depression, we need to be sure that we state one of the major differences is time. It is natural to feel a bit of sadness after birth; however, the longer the sadness lasts the more likely it is developing into postpartum depression. Mental health has a stigma that comes along with it that can and in some cases will prevent the new mother from seeking treatment. As a nurse we, it is of the utmost importance that we provide reassurance that these feelings are real, they can develop into something dangerous if left untreated, and we are here for the new mother. We need to be nonjudgmental and encourage expression of grief or whatever feelings the new mom may be feeling. Feelings such as being overwhelmed, and hopelessness can really take a toll on mom and baby in relation to proper bonding. As nurses we need to let her know that it is normal to be a little sad after birth, but if it lasts longer than two weeks, she needs to seek medical attention to protect her and her child.

Conclusion

In relation to my patients currently, I do not have a postpartum mother; however, this will apply to the patients I will see in the future. There is bound to be a postpartum mom, who is at risk or of is going through this. No matter where it is, knowing the signs and symptoms as well as watching behaviors and the interaction between mom and baby will help me give proper education to the new mother, her spouse as well as family. No matter where I work, patient safety is number one, and being able to properly identify these certain behaviors will enable me to help my patient faster.