



# Black Women and Postpartum Depression



## What is it?

Postpartum depression (PPD) is a mood disorder that affects women after childbirth. Three million women are diagnosed with PPD yearly in America.

## Postpartum Depression/Anxiety Symptoms?

- Feeling sad, hopeless, empty, or overwhelmed
- Crying more often than usual or for no apparent reason
- Worrying or feeling overly anxious
- Feeling moody, irritable, or restless
- Oversleeping, or being unable to sleep even when her baby is asleep
- Eating too little or too much
- Withdrawing from or avoiding friends and family
- Having trouble concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions
- Experiencing anger or rage
- Losing interest in activities that are usually enjoyable
- Suffering from physical aches and pains, including frequent headaches, stomach problems, and muscle pain

## What is the Baby Blues?

Mothers commonly experience what is called "the baby blues," mood swings that are the result of high hormonal fluctuations that occur during and immediately after childbirth (up to two weeks). Postpartum blues are very common, occurring in up to 80% of new mothers after childbirth. Symptoms include: mood swings, anxiety, sadness, irritability, feeling overwhelmed, crying, reduced concentration, appetite problems, trouble sleeping and withdrawing from or avoiding friends and family.



## Black Women and Postpartum

African American pregnant women are in need of such protective factors as they are at an increased risk for developing PPD due to chronic environmental stressors and lack of social support. PPD increased for women of color due to risk factors such as immigration status, interpersonal violence, self-perceived health and social support.

# Postpartum occurs in African American and Latino women at 20% more than white women



## Here are some reasons why:

### Financial



PPD occurs more frequently in individuals who are socially and emotionally disadvantaged. **One in four minority low-income mothers are likely to develop PPD** (Sampson, Zayas, & Seifert, 2013). African American women are disproportionately apart of the lower income bracket.

### Cultural Factors



**Depression and mental illness** in general, has a stigma attached. Often depression is not discussed easily among African American people because of the stigma attached and the mistrust of the health care system.

### Social Support



Support during pregnancy and after delivery is an important **factor in decreasing depression in African American women.**



MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



www.samhsa.gov • 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)

#### Resources for help:

[https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/postpartum-depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20376617?utm\\_source=Google&utm\\_medium=abstract&utm\\_content=Postpartum-depression&utm\\_campaign=Knowledge-panel](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/postpartum-depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20376617?utm_source=Google&utm_medium=abstract&utm_content=Postpartum-depression&utm_campaign=Knowledge-panel)

<https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/pregnancy-and-postpartum-disorders>

[https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1171&context=edc\\_theses](https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1171&context=edc_theses)