

What is Perinatal Depression & Anxiety?

Perinatal depression is different from the “baby blues” which some women experience in the first two weeks after giving birth.²

Perinatal depression and anxiety are mood disorders that occur during or after pregnancy. Symptoms include extreme sadness, anxiety and fatigue. While severity of postpartum depression can vary, these symptoms can interfere with a mother’s ability to care for themselves and others. Treatment is often required for women to feel better.³

The Impact

1 in 7 women experience perinatal depression thus making it the #1 complication of pregnancy.⁴

Perinatal depression is treatable.⁵

Untreated Perinatal Mental Health Conditions are **costly**, \$32,000 over six-years for every mother–child pair affected but not treated.⁶

Untreated perinatal depression is **potentially harmful for children** and can lead to:

- developmental and cognitive delays
- behavioral issues
- increased school absence
- more frequent emergency department (ED) visits.⁷

What can be done?

Screening is the first step. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends at least one screening for depression and anxiety during the perinatal period.⁸ The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends screening for postpartum depression at the 1-, 2-, 4-, and 6-month well-child visits.⁹

Both The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and The American Academy of Pediatrics recommend the use of a validated screening tool—such as the Edinburgh Postpartum Depression Scale (EPDS)—which is designed to reliably and validly measure perinatal depression.

Step 1: Screening

All women & birthing people should be screened using a validated tool during the perinatal period.

Step 2: Referral

Women & birthing people with a positive screen should be connected to services through warm handoffs or integration models.¹⁰

Step 3: Treatment

Women are connected to and engaged in mental health treatment and/or culturally relevant community services.¹¹

For providers:

To join a cohort of PA PQC hospitals that will adopt the Moving on Maternal Depression Change Package, assess your current processes and/or express interest in joining this initiative, please complete [this survey](#).

For more information please contact: Sara Jann, Director of Policy & Advocacy, Maternity Care Coalition at sjann@maternitycarecoalition.org. To learn more about Thriving PA, please visit <https://thrivingpa.org/>.

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3 www.nlm.nih.gov/health/publications/perinatal-depression/index.shtml
4 www.acog.org/-/media/project/acog/acogorg/clinical/files/committee-opinion/articles/2018/11/screening-for-perinatal-depression.pdf
5 www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2724170
6 www.mathematica.org/news/new-study-uncovers-the-heavy-financial-toll-of-untreated-maternal-mental-health-conditions

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8 www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2018/11/screening-for-perinatal-depression
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