

For Fathers/Partners

"It's like an alien abduction"

When your partner has a PMAD you may feel:

- Worried
- Frustrated
- Overwhelmed
- Angry
- Afraid she'll never be the same again

This may be a tough time for you, too. You are also in the perfect position to help her get the help she needs.

Advice for Fathers

- Know that PMADs are real, & she's not making this up.
- Understand that this isn't her fault.
- Be patient and encouraging.
- Tell her you love her.
- Acknowledge & support her efforts to be well.
- Learn all you can about perinatal mood & anxiety disorders & help her find support & professional care.
- Take care of yourself, & seek your own support.
- Know that, with help, she will be well.

What you can do

Self-help: If you're experiencing a perinatal mood or anxiety disorder, the following things can help:

- Sleep - Sleep when baby sleeps, or find someone to care for the baby so you can nap or sleep at night.
- Exercise - Mild to moderate activity, like walking, is good for your body & mind.
- Eat - Nutritious foods rich in protein can give you energy.
- Talk - With a friend, family member or counselor, talk about how you feel.
- Accept Help - Give yourself permission to do less and let help in.
- Take time for you - Even 10-15 minutes a day helps.
- Give yourself credit for all you do - You're doing more than you think.

When Self-Help is not Enough

If your symptoms worsen or interfere with your daily life, please contact Postpartum Support International. Volunteers who have "been there" are ready to offer support and resources.

Remember, "You're not alone."

Postpartum Support International,
AZ Warmline:
(888) 434-MOMS(6667)

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WHAT EVERY New Parent SHOULD KNOW

Perinatal Mood Disorders



ARIZONA POSTPARTUM WELLNESS COALITION
in partnership with PSI-AZ Chapter

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What is a Perinatal Mood or Anxiety Disorder?

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

Many women experience shifts in their emotions during pregnancy and after childbirth. These range from mild to severe and, together, are called perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs). PMADs are caused by: changes in hormones, the physical toll of labor and delivery, not getting enough sleep, and the mental and physical stress of caring for a newborn.



Baby Blues

75-80% of new moms will have the baby blues, or mild depression mixed with happier feelings. This "emotional roller coaster" usually begins 2-3 days postpartum and may include:

- sadness/crying spells
- feeling overwhelmed
- fatigue/exhaustion
- feeling nervous/anxious
- trouble sleeping
- trouble coping

Pregnancy/Postpartum Depression

10% of women will experience depression in pregnancy and 15% will have postpartum depression (PPD). Symptoms include those in the baby blues, plus:

- Anger, fear, and/or feelings of guilt
- Thoughts of inadequacy as a person/mother
- Appetite changes
- Cloudy thinking/trouble making decisions
- Feeling isolated from others or disconnected from the baby
- Possible suicidal thoughts

Pregnancy/Postpartum Panic Anxiety

Up to 6% of pregnant and 10% of postpartum women will experience an anxiety disorder. These include:

Pregnancy/postpartum panic disorder, with symptoms like:

- Feeling very nervous, worried, or afraid
- Recurring panic attacks (shortness of breath, chest pain, heart palpitations)

Pregnancy/postpartum obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), with symptoms like:

- Obsessions (intense thoughts or mental images about the baby)
- Compulsions (doing things over and over to reduce fears and obsessions)
- A sense of horror about the obsessions

Postpartum posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), after childbirth, with symptoms like:

- Re-experiencing the traumatic birth experience (nightmares, flashbacks)
- Numbing behaviors (trying not to think/talk about it)
- High arousal (anxiety, fear, exaggerated startle response)

Postpartum Psychosis

1-2 of every 1,000 women will experience sudden psychotic symptoms, usually within the first two weeks. This requires immediate hospitalization to protect the mother and baby. Symptoms include:

- Delusions (strange beliefs) and/or hallucinations (seeing/hearing things)
- Extreme irritability, agitation, and trouble sleeping
- Sudden mood or personality changes with poor decision-making



Treatment Options

Help is available for PMADs, and with help, you will be well. The most common treatment methods include:

- Support groups for pregnancy/postpartum
- Individual, couples, or family therapy
- Medication, in some cases

The best treatment is usually a combination of these.