

# ARC Mental Health Information Series

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## Postpartum Depression

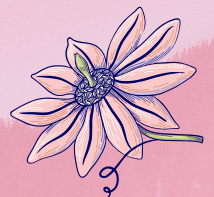
1 out of every 7 women who have experienced childbirth in the last 6 months experience symptoms of a postpartum mood disorder. Women with postpartum depression have symptoms like the ones listed below much of the time, for a period of at least 2 weeks or longer. With treatment, 80% of women will recover from their depression.



- Untreated perinatal mental health issues can lead to chronic depression.
- Suicide is the 4th leading cause of maternal death in Canada.
- Perinatal mental illness negatively impacts parental-infant attachment and can impair the child's cognitive and psychosocial development all the way into adulthood.

### Symptoms

- Feeling of sadness and anxiety
- Sleeping a lot or not enough
- Eating too little or too much
- Unexplained aches, pain or illness
- Anxiety, irritation or anger for no reason
- Sudden mood changes
- Poor concentration
- Difficulty in remembering things
- Feelings of worthlessness, guilt and hopelessness
- Recurrent thoughts of death and suicide
- Lack of pleasure in things that were earlier enjoyable
- Feeling disconnected from the baby



## Screening

The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), is the most widely used screening tool to identify women with postpartum mood disorders. A condensed version of 3 questions can help you identify if you need to seek professional advice. If you answer in the affirmative for these questions, please seek an appointment with your physician.

1. I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong
2. I have been anxious or worried for no good reason
3. I have felt scared or panicky for no valid reason

## Treatment

Depending on the severity of symptoms, treatment includes a combination of medication and therapy. Therapy that is commonly used includes cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and interpersonal therapy (IPT).

Additional behaviours to reduce the depression include:

- Prioritizing sleep and healthy eating.
- Getting help with the baby so that you can take better care of yourself with nourishing food, showers or having time to do things you enjoy.
- Getting some sunshine.
- Gentle movement like walks or postpartum yoga.
- Social time to reduce isolation. This may be a support group but can also be friends from before the baby, family, mom groups or even breastfeeding groups.

## Resources available

Local Support: MAM Marraine autour de la maternite: Perinatal support workers available  
2060 Holmes St., St-Hubert, QC J4T 1R8 (450) 904-1458 [www.mam.qc.ca](http://www.mam.qc.ca).

Psychosocial support available at your local CLSC and through your primary care physician.

CLSC St-Hubert (450) 443-7400

CLSC Brossard (450) 445-4452

CLSC St-Jean-sur-Richelieu (450) 358-2572

CLSC Richelieu (450) 658-7561

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