



We can help

Oaklawn Hospital is committed to helping new mothers and offers a variety of services to identify risk factors and provide support, both in the hospital and after you go home.

In the hospital

New mothers who deliver a baby at Oaklawn Hospital Birth Center complete a Postpartum Depression Risk Assessment screening before going home. Postpartum depression is highly treatable, and we want to ensure that no woman leaves the hospital without support, education and follow-up care.

After you go home

Sometimes, when you are struggling as a new mom you may be embarrassed or even afraid to tell someone what you are really thinking for fear of being misunderstood. Please remember that postpartum depression is a real medical illness. By sharing your feelings with a professional, you can access the special support you may need during this challenging time. The back panel of this brochure details a list of people and resources you can trust to guide you toward recovery with confidentiality and compassion.

Support resources

- * Postpartum Emotional Support Program
For more information or further support, please call Beth List, M.A. Michigan Limited License Psychologist* Michigan Licensed Professional Counselor
Oaklawn Psychological Services
(269) 781-9119
- * Postpartum Emotional Adjustment Support Group
Attend "Babies cry...so do moms" support group. Sessions are held weekly at Bear Creek Campus Activity Room, and are free of charge.
Please call Aimee Lemon, M.S.W. at
(269) 781-9119 for additional information.
- * For emergencies call 911.

* The state of Michigan permits limited licensed psychologists to practice under the supervision of licensed psychologists.

Web resources

- * Oaklawn Hospital – www.oaklawnhospital.org
 - * Click on "Babies cry...so do moms" found under News and Events
- * Postpartum Support International – Postpartum.net
- * Father's Support – PostpartumDADS.org
- * Interactive Support Group – Ppdsupportpage.com
- * MedEd PPD – Mededppd.org



OaklawnHospital

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Babies cry, so do moms...



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Help is Available



“We want to ensure that no woman leaves the hospital without support, education and follow-up care.”



This isn't what I expected

You have just been through one of life's most stressful and exciting events – pregnancy and childbirth! The time after birth and getting used to being a parent can be challenging. You are going through many physical and emotional changes, and some may be very confusing or even frightening. Often there are the expected feelings of excitement and joy, along with the feelings of anxiety and worry. Some new mothers have a variety of reactions that are commonly described as:

Baby blues

About 50-80 percent of new mothers may experience a letdown in the first one to two weeks after birth. Symptoms may include crying for no obvious reason or feeling tired, impatient, restless or anxious. This is the most common, least severe and most well known of the postpartum reactions. If your symptoms last more than two weeks, it could be more than the baby blues.



Postpartum depression

Postpartum depression (PPD) can happen any time during the first year after birth. Women who have dealt with PPD describe their feelings as:

- * "It feels scary."
- * "I cry almost every day."
- * "It feels out of control."
- * "I feel sad and depressed a lot and have no interest in things I used to enjoy."
- * "It feels like I'm never going to feel like myself again."
- * "I don't see a way out. Everything looks hopeless."
- * "It feels like no one understands."
- * "It feels like my relationship cannot survive this."
- * "Sometimes I have frightening thoughts and feelings."
- * "It feels like I'm a bad mother."
- * "It feels like I am going crazy or I feel panicky."
- * "I feel like I cannot do anything right."
- * "My appetite has changed."
- * "I cannot sleep even when baby is sleeping."
- * "I cannot concentrate."
- * "I am often angry at the people around me."

About 15-20 percent of new mothers may experience postpartum depression (PPD). You and those around you may be very bewildered by your feelings and behavior. However, it is important for you to let someone know how you are feeling. PPD can happen to any childbearing woman regardless of race, income, culture, age or education. Although it is not fully understood why PPD happens, we do know exactly what to do to treat it.

Postpartum psychosis

Postpartum psychosis is the least common of the postpartum reactions. It occurs in about one in 1,000 women. Symptoms are very severe and may include being unable to sleep, feeling agitated and angry, hallucinating (seeing or hearing things that are not real) and bizarre feelings or behavior. Call your health care provider right away if you have these symptoms, or go immediately to the Oaklawn Emergency Room. For emergencies, call 911.

What can you do?

First, focus on self-help measures, such as eating healthy, even if you are not hungry. Avoid caffeine, alcohol and high sugar foods. Rest as much as you can, even if you can't sleep. Get out of the house for a walk, even if you don't feel like moving. Talk to someone you trust about the way you are feeling. Let your partner know. Find supportive people who can help you, and accept their help.

If self-help measures aren't enough, call your health care provider or call Beth List, M.A.,* Oaklawn Psychological Services at (269) 781-9119 for assistance. Do not wait to get proper care. Remember:

- * You are not alone.
- * You are not to blame.
- * You will recover with proper help.