Signs of Prenatal & Postpartum Depression

Mental health challenges during pregnancy and after birth are common, real, and treatable. This guide helps you understand the signs, trust your instincts, and know when and how to seek support.

Why Perinatal Mental Health Matters

Pregnancy and the postpartum period bring physical, emotional, and hormonal changes. For some parents, these changes can lead to depression, anxiety, or trauma-related symptoms. Untreated mental health concerns can affect daily functioning, relationships, and bonding with baby. Early support can make a powerful difference.

What Is the Difference Between Baby Blues and Depression?

Baby blues are common in the first two weeks after birth and may include mood swings, crying, or irritability. These feelings usually improve with rest and support.

Prenatal or postpartum depression lasts longer than two weeks, feels more intense, and interferes with daily life. It is not a personal failure—it is a medical condition that deserves care.

Common Signs of Prenatal & Postpartum Depression

- *Persistent sadness, tearfulness, or feeling numb*
- *Feeling hopeless, overwhelmed, or like you are failing*
- *Loss of interest in things you once enjoyed*
- *Difficulty bonding with your baby*
- *Changes in sleep or appetite beyond what feels manageable*

• *Excessive guilt, shame, or worthlessness*
• *Withdrawing from loved ones*
• *Trouble concentrating or making decisions*

Signs That Need Immediate Attention

Seek immediate help if you experience:
• *Thoughts of harming yourself or ending your life*
• *Thoughts of harming your baby*
• *Feeling disconnected from reality*
• *Severe anxiety or panic that does not stop*

These symptoms are medical emergencies. You deserve immediate support.

You Are Not Alone — And This Is Treatable

Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders affect many parents, including those with healthy pregnancies and strong support systems. Treatment may include therapy, medication, support groups, or a combination. Help is available, and recovery is possible.

How to Talk to a Provider

If you are unsure how to bring this up, try:
• *"I'm not feeling like myself, and I need help."*
• *"These feelings are lasting longer than two weeks."*
• *"I'm having trouble functioning day to day."*
• *"I need a mental health screening."*

You can ask that your concerns be documented in your medical record.

Partner & Family Support

Loved ones can help by listening without judgment, encouraging professional support, helping with daily tasks, and checking in regularly. If someone expresses thoughts of harm, take it seriously and help them access immediate care.

Alabama-Specific Note

In Alabama, mental health support may be available through OB providers, primary care clinics, community mental health centers, Medicaid/Plan First services, and crisis

hotlines. If you are unsure where to start, ask your provider or local health department for referrals.

If You Need Help Right Now

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.
You can also call or text 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, available 24/7.

Reaching out is a sign of strength, not weakness.