

## Identifying Maternal Depression Missed opportunities to support moms



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[www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/](http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/)

**1 in 8**

1 in 8 women report symptoms of depression after giving birth.

**20%**

About 1 in 5 women were not asked about depression during a prenatal visit.

**50%**

Over half of pregnant women with depression were not treated.

### Overview:

Pregnancy can be an exciting time in a woman's life, but it can also bring challenges. Many women experience the baby blues after giving birth, and some women develop symptoms of depression that are more intense, long-lasting, and can interfere with daily activities.

Mothers with depression feel sad, hopeless, and have little interest in doing things they once enjoyed.

- Postpartum depression, which can last months or years after giving birth, can affect a mother's ability to bond with and care for her baby.
- If left untreated, it can impact the mother's health and may cause sleeping, eating, and behavioral problems for the baby.
- When maternal depression is effectively treated and managed, it benefits both mother and child.



### PROBLEM:

## Healthcare providers are missing opportunities to ask women about depression.

- About 1 in 5 women were not asked about symptoms of depression during a prenatal visit, and 1 in 8 were not asked during a postpartum visit.
- Whether healthcare providers ask pregnant and postpartum women about depression varies from state to state.
  - States range from 51% to 91% of women asked during a prenatal visit and 51% to 96% of women asked during a postpartum visit.



**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

## Postpartum depression is more serious than baby blues

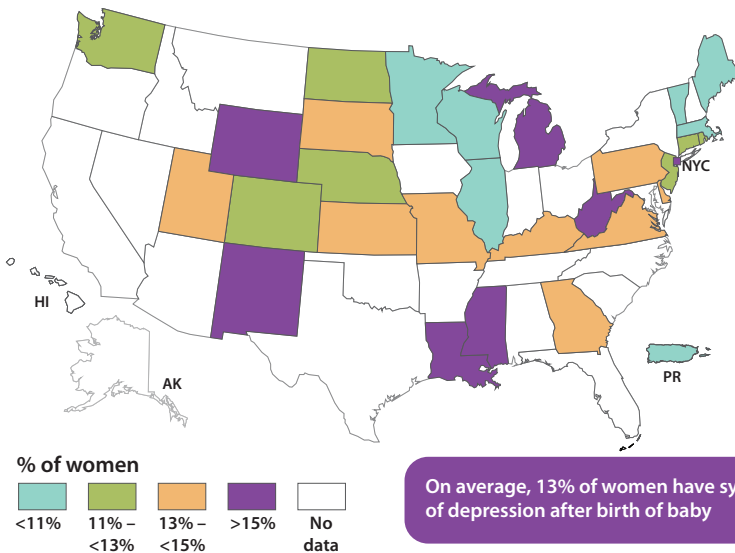
### BABY BLUES

- Very common
- Usually starts 2–3 days after birth
- May experience feelings of worry, unhappiness, and fatigue
- Usually gets better on its own within 2 weeks

### POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

- Usually starts 1–3 weeks after birth
- Interferes with ability to do daily life activities
- Intense symptoms of sadness, anxiety, and hopelessness
- May include loss of interest in activities, withdrawing from friends and family, or thoughts of hurting self or baby
- Can occur up to a year after birth
- Usually requires treatment

## Percentage of women with symptoms of depression after birth varies by state



Source: CDC's Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System Survey–31 sites, 2018

## Talk with every mom, every pregnancy



### Additional resources on depression:

<https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/depression/resources.htm>

## THE WAY FORWARD >>>

### STATES CAN:

- Support programs that help providers screen and treat women.
- Use existing programs like Healthy Start, home visiting, and Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant to address maternal depression.
- Monitor measures related to maternal depression.

### HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS CAN:

- Ask every pregnant and postpartum woman about symptoms of depression.
- Know local resources for referral to treatment and follow up.

### WOMEN CAN:

- Know that you are not alone.
- Tell your doctor about your symptoms.
- Ask about options for help.

### FRIENDS AND FAMILIES CAN:

- Know the symptoms of depression.
- Encourage women to talk with a healthcare provider about symptoms of depression.
- Offer emotional and practical support.

### For more information

1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)

TTY: 1-888-232-6348 | Web: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

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