



Birthing Individuals and Partners/Spouses/Family Members

PERINATAL PSYCHOSIS (PP)

(After a loss, or after birth)

WHAT IS IT?

Perinatal psychosis (PP) is a serious mental health issue that can happen in the first few weeks after birth. It can also begin later or after you stop chestfeeding/breastfeeding.

WHO IS AT HIGHER RISK?

- You are more likely to get PP if you or a family member has bipolar disorder or psychosis.
- About 40–50% of people with PP have no past mental health problems.
- PP happens in about 1–2 out of every 1,000.

SYMPTOMS

- Trouble sleeping or feeling like you do not need sleep.
- Very high energy, racing thoughts, or talking very fast (mania).
- Deep sadness, anxiety, or numbness (depression).
- Trouble thinking clearly, reading, or answering questions.
- Strong suspicious thoughts or fear that others want to harm you (paranoia).
- **Delusions:** firm false beliefs (for example, thinking your baby is a special being/God, thinking you have a special mission, receiving messages from songs, or an outside force acting on you).
- **Hallucinations:** hearing, seeing, or feeling, or smelling things others do not.

WHAT TO DO

- **PP is a medical emergency.** Do not wait.
- **Get help now:** go to the emergency room or call your health care provider. Hospital care is needed.
- With treatment, full recovery is possible. Treatment may include hospital care, medicines, and therapy.
- PP is an illness. It is not the fault of the person or the family.

You are not alone. You are not to blame. With help, you will be well.

References

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