

WHERE IS THE PINK CLOUD?

Not a pink, but a gray, or even a deep black cloud during pregnancy or after giving birth.

This can happen to anyone and actually (happens) more often than you might think.



My head is spinning
like crazy, I find it
difficult to relax

I had pictured
things
differently

I do not feel
like myself at all



I often feel sad
and angry

I am terribly
worried about
my baby

Table of contents

A new phase	3
Risk factors	4
Symptoms	5
What can you do?	6
Postpartum depression in partners	7
Well prepared for parenthood	8



A NEW PHASE

When you are pregnant or have recently given birth, you may feel bad or have strong feelings (of anxiety). This is not unusual: the hormones released during pregnancy and childbirth can upset you emotionally. The arrival of your child is a major event for you and your partner. It turns your familiar life upside down.

In the first ten days after birth, most mothers (50 till 80%) are stressed. They get angry easily or burst out crying. We call this maternity tears or baby blues. Baby blues will usually go away by themselves, but sometimes there is more to it than that. You might be suffering from postpartum depression. What is it exactly and how do you recognize postpartum depression?



Depressive symptoms and postpartum depression are more common than you might think

Some women are gloomy, irritable, anxious, and depressed for months during pregnancy or after giving birth. After delivery, this is called postpartum depression.

Every year, more than 23,000 new mothers (13%) experience postpartum depression.

Talking about your feelings really helps

It can be good to talk about your feelings with others. Talking about young parenthood helps and can prevent gloomy feelings from getting worse. It ensures that you understand each other and can be a step towards the right help. And you discover that you are certainly not the only one who feels this way.

RISK FACTORS...

What increases your risk of depression after giving birth?

We do not know exactly how postpartum depression develops. However, we do know which factors are involved.



SYMPTOMS...

How do I recognize postnatal depression?

The symptoms of postpartum depression are similar to regular depression. The difference is that this depression is linked to pregnancy or delivery.

Common depressive symptoms are:

- > You feel gloomy and have no desire to do anything
- > You are extremely tired and listless/lifeless
- > You are not happy with the baby
- > You are overprotective
- > You feel worthless and unfit for motherhood
- > You are easily irritated and cry a lot
- > You have difficulties concentrating and forget things
- > You feel powerless, desperate, and frightened
- > You sleep badly
- > You eat too much or just too little

You can also develop depressive symptoms or experience a depression during pregnancy.

Do you recognize any of these symptoms in yourself?
Then know that:

- ➡ (Mild) depressive symptoms **almost always pass**. It will be the same for you!
- ➡ **You are not alone**. It can happen to anyone, different types of women, anywhere in the world.
- ➡ **There is no such thing as a perfect mother**. Everyone makes mistakes.
- ➡ **Don't be too hard on yourself**. You learn to be a mother by trial and error.
- ➡ Your child does not need a perfect mother, it does need your **attention, care and love**. That is the most important thing.



WHAT CAN YOU DO...

And how can those around you help?

This advice will help you get a grip on your feelings and take steps towards improvement:

1

The first step is accepting that something is wrong

Take your feelings and complaints seriously. Accept that you are not feeling as you would like at the moment.

2

Talk about it!

- > **Raise the alarm, talk about it with someone you feel comfortable with.** Your partner, family, or a good friend. Tell her/him how you feel. It will make you feel better, and it will give them a chance to help you.
- > **Tell them you are not feeling well.** The sooner you do this, the greater the chance that your symptoms will diminish.

3

Take good care of yourself

- > **Let your partner or someone you trust take care of your baby.** That does not make you a bad mother. On the contrary, it shows that you are very involved.
- > **Take time for yourself and rest.** With or without the baby.
- > **Don't be too hard on yourself.** Having a baby is a huge change in your life.

4

SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP!

Postpartum depression is very treatable. **Don't wait too long, but discuss your feelings** with a midwife, maternity nurse, or your youth physician/nurse at the child healthcare center. They can help you on your way. Your GP can also advise you on the best course of action in your situation. **The GP can also determine whether you are suffering from depression.**



POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION IN PARTNERS

We are less likely to think of our partners having postpartum depression. **But partners can also develop depression during pregnancy or after birth.** So, as parents, you are both susceptible to developing depressive symptoms.

In fathers, we know that this depression usually manifests itself differently from depression in mothers. Fathers are more likely to throw themselves into work, drink more or become easily irritable.

If you recognize any of these symptoms in your partner, encourage them to seek help as soon as possible.

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Knowing what depression is helps you in your recovery.

➡ Visit www.mentaalvitaal.nl/psychische-aandoening/postnatale-depressie for more information.

You can prepare well for the arrival of your baby

For example, by taking courses during and after pregnancy.

For example:

- > **Pregnancy meetings in the local area.** You will meet women in the same situation and possibly with the same feelings.
- > **www.wellmom.nl.** This app helps you to stay positive during and after your pregnancy.
- > **www.howaboutmom.nl.** This app provides information to guide you through your first year as a mother.
- > **Online pregnancy courses 'Baby on the way'.** The courses are about pregnancy, giving birth and the period after giving birth.
- > **Mamacafé.** See if there is one near you. You can attend together with your baby. You will meet other mothers. It is very nice to exchange stories.

Contact details:

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