

Reaching out for the proper help is an important step toward recovery. If you are experiencing the symptoms described in this brochure, do not continue to suffer in silence. Share your concerns with your health care professional and get in touch with us.

## DEPRESSION AFTER DELIVERY, INC.

### HISTORY

Depression After Delivery, Inc. is a national, nonprofit organization founded in 1985 by Nancy Berchtold after experiencing her own postpartum complications.

Nancy, joined by others affected by postpartum complications, and professionals interested in public and professional education, began the journey down the road to awareness, hope, recovery, and prevention. Following national recognition on *The Phil Donahue Show* and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, D.A.D. took on a life of its own.

### PURPOSE

The organization was formed to provide support for women with postpartum depression. It has expanded its focus to include education, information, and referral for women and families coping with mental health issues associated with childbearing, both during pregnancy and postpartum.

D.A.D., Inc. also promotes awareness of these issues to all sectors of the community and advocates for the well-being of women and their families.

When you reach out to us, we will send you information on pregnancy and postpartum disorders, a professional referral list, and a list of our volunteer telephone contacts and support groups.

### MISSION

Universal Awareness of Mood and Anxiety Disorders Surrounding Pregnancy and Childbirth!

If you wish to receive a free information packet or to receive more of these brochures, please call the following number and leave your name and address.

**Information Request Line: 1-800-944-4PPD**

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Helping Women Deal With Feelings Surrounding  
Pregnancy and Childbirth Since 1985.

## Pregnancy and Postpartum Mood Disorders

Are you pregnant?

Have you had a baby in the past year?

Have you miscarried?

Are you feeling sad, nervous, worried, or scared?

## You Are Not Alone! We Can Help!

Depression After Delivery, Inc.  
91 East Somerset Street, Raritan, NJ 08869

**Information Request Line: 1-800-944-4PPD**

[www.depressionafterdelivery.com](http://www.depressionafterdelivery.com)

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D.A.D., Inc. Membership

Members receive our biannual newsletter *Heart Strings*,  
and membership fees are due on an annual basis

\_\_\_ I would like to become a General Member. Enclosed is \$30.00.

\_\_\_ I am a physician or allied health care professional interested in becoming listed as a professional resource for D.A.D., Inc. Please send me a professional information packet/application. (Professional Members- \$100.00)

\_\_\_ I want to help D.A.D., Inc continue providing free information, education, support and resources to those in need. Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ for use where the need is greatest.

(All donations are tax deductible)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO: Depression After Delivery, Inc., 91 East Somerset St., Raritan, NJ 08869

For Office Use Only

Support ♦ Education ♦ Information ♦ Referral

**D**uring pregnancy and following the birth of a baby, a wide range of emotions are possible. Often there are the expected feelings of excitement and joy, along with feelings of anxiety and worry.



Mothers may also feel overwhelmed, uncertain, and frustrated. Being pregnant can be difficult. Caring for an infant is hard work. Regardless of how prepared you were or how much you looked forward to your pregnancy and your baby's birth, this time may include some unexpected "highs" and "lows". Time, patience, and support from family and friends are all helpful during this period of adjustment.

Sometimes, in spite of help and support, women may feel bewildered and concerned about themselves. These more confusing emotions are classified in the following ways:

### **Baby Blues**

"The baby blues" is an extremely common reaction occurring in the first few days after delivery, usually appearing suddenly on the third or fourth day. Fifty to 75% of all new mothers experience this feeling of letdown after the emotionally charged experience of birth. Symptoms may include crying for no apparent reason, impatience, irritability, restlessness and anxiety. This is the most common, and least severe, and the most well known of the postpartum reactions. Symptoms of the blues are briefly unpleasant and usually disappear on their own, sometimes as quickly as they came.

### **Postpartum Depression**

At least one in ten new mothers experience various degrees of postpartum depression. Postpartum complications can occur within days of the delivery or appear gradually, sometimes up to a year or so later. Symptoms may include:

- **sluggishness, fatigue, exhaustion**
- **sadness, depression, hopelessness**
- **appetite and sleep disturbances**
- **poor concentration, confusion**
- **memory loss**
- **overconcern for the baby**
- **uncontrollable crying, irritability**
- **lack of interest in the baby**
- **guilt, inadequacy, worthlessness**
- **fear of harming the baby**
- **fear of harming yourself**
- **exaggerated highs and/or lows**
- **lack of interest in sex**

A woman suffering from postpartum depression will usually experience several of the above symptoms ranging from mild to severe. She may experience "good" days and alternating "bad" days. Although postpartum depression does not take the same form for every woman, all of the symptoms can be equally distressing and often leaves the woman feeling ashamed, guilty and isolated.

Some women may not feel depressed, but may feel very anxious.

**Postpartum anxiety and/or panic disorder** is characterized by:

- **intense anxiety and/or fear**
- **rapid breathing**
- **fast heart rate**
- **sense of doom**
- **hot or cold flashes**
- **chest pain**
- **shaking**
- **dizziness**

Postpartum distress may also include obsessive compulsive features. **Postpartum Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)** can occur for the first time in women following childbirth. If a woman has a history of OCD, her symptoms may intensify. Symptoms include:

- **intrusive, repetitive thoughts (including thoughts of harming the baby)**
- **avoidance behavior (i.e. avoiding the baby to alleviate intrusive thoughts)**
- **anxiety**
- **depression**

These thoughts are often scary and are perceived as being out of character for the woman experiencing them.

### **Postpartum Psychosis**

Postpartum psychosis is the most severe and, fortunately, the rarest postpartum reaction. It occurs in about 1 in 1,000 women, usually within the first three weeks after the birth. Symptoms are very exaggerated. The woman will experience a break with reality which may include the experience of hallucinations and/or delusions. Other symptoms may include severe insomnia, agitation, and bizarre feelings and behavior. Postpartum psychosis is a serious emergency and requires immediate medical help.

### **Antepartum Disorders**

Although you may be familiar with terms such as "baby blues" and "postpartum depression" as they apply to the time period after childbirth, some women experience these symptoms during pregnancy, following a miscarriage, or termination of pregnancy, as well as, after childbirth.

### **Who Is Affected?**

Any woman who is pregnant, had a baby within the past year or so, miscarried, or recently weaned a child from breast feeding can be affected, regardless of how many previously uncomplicated pregnancies and/or postpartum adjustments she has had. Most women have never experienced anything like this at any other time in their lives.

### **What Causes These Mood & Anxiety Disorders?**

We are not 100% sure. There are multiple causes for mood and anxiety disorders - hormonal imbalance, stress, isolation, etc.... Currently, hormones are receiving attention in the search for causes of pregnancy and postpartum mood and anxiety disorders. Researchers have suggested that the rapid changes in levels of hormones such as estrogen, progesterone and thyroid appear to have a strong effect on women's moods.

### **Treatment**

Treatment for these disorders varies, depending on the type and severity of symptoms. **All of the symptoms, from the mild to the most severe, are temporary and treatable with skilled professional help and support.**

A woman experiencing any of the symptoms described in this brochure should contact her health care professional. She should have a complete medical evaluation, including a thyroid screening.

The "ideal" treatment plan includes:

- **medical evaluation (to eliminate physiological causes such as thyroid)**
- **psychiatric evaluation**
- **psychotherapy**
- **participation in a support group for emotional support and education**