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San Diego Postpartum Health Alliance

San Diego Postpartum Health Alliance is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness about postpartum mood and anxiety disorders and providing support and treatment referrals to women who are struggling with them.

What we offer:

- Support & referral line with trained volunteers
- Connections to support groups
- Referrals to therapists and doctors who specialize in postpartum disorders
- Support from telephone volunteers who have "been there" and recovered
- Training and educational materials

The smartest thing you can do for yourself and your family is to get help. **You are not alone! You are worth it!**



Support and referral line:

(619) 254-0023

PostpartumHealthAlliance.org

Take a Screening Test

Please circle the answer that comes closest to how you have felt in the past seven days.

A. I have been able to laugh and see the funny side of things:

- 0- As much as I always could 2- Definitely not quite so much now
1- Not quite as much now 3- Not at all

B. I have looked forward with enjoyment to things:

- 0- As much as I ever did 2- Definitely less than I used to
1- Rather less than I used to 3- Hardly at all

C. I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong:

- 3- Yes, most of the time 1- Not very often
2- Yes, some of the time 0- No, never

D. I have felt worried and anxious for no good reason:

- 0- Not at all 2- Yes, sometimes
1- Hardly ever 3- Yes, very often

E. I have felt scared or panicky for no good reason:

- 3- Yes, quite a lot 1- No, not much
2- Yes, sometimes 0- No, not at all

F. Things have been getting on top of me:

- 3- Yes, most of the time I haven't been able to cope at all
2- Yes, sometimes I haven't been coping as well as usual
1- No, most of the time I have coped quite well
0- No, I have been coping as well as ever

G. I have been so unhappy that I have had difficulty sleeping:

- 3- Yes, most of the time 1- Not very often
2- Yes, sometimes 0- No, not at all

H. I have felt sad or miserable:

- 3- Yes, most of the time 1- Not very often
2- Yes, sometimes 0- No, not at all

I. I have been so unhappy that I have been crying:

- 3- Yes, quite a lot 1- No, not much
2- Yes, sometimes 0- No, not at all

J. The thought of harming myself has occurred to me:

- 3- Yes, quite often 1- Hardly ever
2- Sometimes 0- Never

_____ TOTAL SCORE

Add your circled scores for each question. **If your score is 10 or greater** you may have postpartum depression or anxiety. Speak with your health care provider or contact the **San Diego Postpartum Health Alliance: (619) 254-0023**.

(Please note that this test does not screen for Bipolar Disorder, Postpartum Psychosis, OCD, or PTSD. If you are feeling that something is not right, please call someone right away.)

Cox, J.L., et al. Detection of Postnatal Depression: Development of the 10-item Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale. British Journal of Psychiatry 1987; 150: 782-786.

The funding for this brochure
is generously provided by
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**“Shouldn’t this be the
happiest time of my life?
Then why do I feel
overwhelmed...”**

Do you ever feel like this?

- Crying a lot
- Irritable, anxious or overwhelmed
- Sleep or eating problems
- Feeling like something is just not right

If you experience even one, you are not alone.
Call San Diego Postpartum Health Alliance for help.



Support and referral line:

(619) 254-0023

PostpartumHealthAlliance.org

P.O. Box 927231, San Diego CA 92192 7231
info@postpartumhealthalliance.org

Could I have the Baby Blues or something worse?

The Baby Blues

The Baby Blues start within a few days of giving birth and fade away within the first few weeks. Most new mothers may feel weepy, drained, anxious, irritable and overwhelmed.

Postpartum Depression

Up to 20% of new mothers may have feelings of hopelessness, inadequacy, irritability, sadness, and loneliness that last longer than a few weeks. They may also cry a lot, have trouble eating or sleeping, may not feel bonded to the baby, and may think about hurting themselves.

Postpartum Anxiety

Many mothers may experience anxiety on its own or together with symptoms of depression. Mothers may feel nervous or constant worry about the baby. They may feel panicky or experience panic attacks that feel like they are losing control or going crazy. They may have repetitive obsessive thoughts or images of harming or harm coming to the baby. Some have had a traumatic pregnancy or birth experience that they keep re-experiencing in their mind.

Postpartum Psychosis

This rare condition is often associated with an underlying bipolar disorder and usually occurs within the first few weeks after birth. The mother may have severe mood swings, hallucinations, and irrational or delusional thoughts involving harming self or baby. Postpartum Psychosis is a serious condition that requires immediate medical attention.

Q: Why am I experiencing postpartum depression now?

I was fine for eight months, but now I feel weepy and unable to cope.

A: Hormonal shifts can bring on symptoms of **postpartum depression** shortly after giving birth; however, events such as weaning your baby or starting menstruation or birth control pills can contribute to a late onset. Thyroid problems, which have been associated with depression, will also affect some women. Other risk factors include: Lack of support; personal or family history of depression; low self-esteem; relationship, financial or life stresses; a difficult birth or baby; and severe sleep deprivation. Biological, psychological, and social factors can all play a role.

Q: I am having these horrible thoughts and images that I can't get out of my mind every time I give my baby a bath. I am terrified I may act on them, and I feel like I'm a terrible mother. What's wrong with me?

A: It sounds as if you are suffering from **obsessive compulsive disorder**, a form of postpartum anxiety. **Postpartum OCD** includes intrusive thoughts like you are describing and many new mothers experience it but don't act on it. Therapy and medication can help. It is very different from **postpartum psychosis** in that you realize there is something wrong with your thinking, you do not want to act on it, and you are horrified by it. In **postpartum psychosis**, the mom is not in touch with reality, does not realize there is anything wrong with her thinking, and thoughts about acting on it actually make her feel calm.

Q: My wife has been acting strangely. Sometimes she says bizarre things and sees things that aren't there, and then she'll snap out of it and cook dinner. Is this serious?

A: What your wife is going through sounds like **postpartum psychosis**. This rare but treatable condition is a medical emergency. The symptoms can come and go so it may not seem serious, but it is a medical emergency because the mom can end up harming herself or her baby. Call your doctor immediately.

All these conditions are *treatable*, and you deserve to get help as with any other medical condition. The important thing to remember is that you can get better with skilled professional care and support. You are not alone. You are not to blame. We are here to help.