



## **Postpartum Depression Care**

Life after having a baby can be overwhelming and the sudden change in your hormones may cause physical and/or emotional changes. If you are experiencing feelings such as sadness, exhaustion, or anxiety, contact Crown OB/GYN to discuss your symptoms and the treatment options available to get you feeling yourself again. Please call to schedule a consultation at our OBGYN office in Quincy, Pembroke, Weymouth, and Brockton.

## **What Is Postpartum Depression?**

Postpartum depression (PPD) is a form of depression that occurs specifically during pregnancy or after childbirth. This mental illness is very common and affects more than 800,000 women in the United States alone. Postpartum depression often makes it difficult for these women to perform daily activities for themselves or others.

## **Common Causes**

Postpartum depression is affected by several different physical and emotional factors rather than by a single source.

After childbirth, a woman experiences a dramatic change in her hormone levels, which leads to an alteration of chemicals in her brain. These chemical changes often result in powerful mood swings.

Sleep deprivation is another key contributor to postpartum depression. As the body undergoes an enormous amount of stress during childbirth, it is understandable that it requires an incredible amount of rest in order to fully recuperate. However, many new mothers find it difficult to attain such needed rest, which can heavily impact common symptoms of postpartum depression like exhaustion.

## **Symptoms of Postpartum Depression**

Postpartum depression typically creates feelings of extreme sadness, exhaustion, and anxiety in women for an extended period of time. Additional symptoms include:

- Crying more than usual or for no apparent reason
- Feeling irritable, moody, or restless
- Flashes of anger or rage
- Physical pains such as headaches, muscle pains, or stomach issues
- Changes in sleep habits - either too much or too little
- Loss of interest in activities that were once very enjoyable
- Isolation of self from friends and family
- Difficulty in bonding with the baby
- Significant changes in eating habits - eating too much or too little
- Doubt in ability to care for the baby
- Inability to concentrate, remember specific details, or make decisions

More concerning symptoms such as thoughts of harming oneself or the baby can be signs of a more rare mental illness called postpartum psychosis, which should be treated immediately.

## **Treatment Options in the South Shore Area**

Treatment for postpartum depression is often handled using therapy, medication, or a combination of the two.

Many patients that suffer from postpartum depression have found talk therapies to be very helpful. More specifically, patients often find success in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Interpersonal Therapy (IPT).

Medications such as antidepressants can help to regulate abnormal changes in chemicals of the brain, which lead to a more stable mood. It is important to talk with your doctor about such medications, as certain types may or may not be considered.