

A CONTINUUM OF REACTIONS TO CHILDBIRTH

Postpartum Emotional Syndromes are possible reactions to childbirth. This can be expressed on a continuum or spectrum of severities, with symptoms ranging from mild to severe. It is very important not to ignore the baby blues since the onset of severe cases occurs during the same period and may exhibit the same symptoms.

SYMPTOMS

MILD	MILD TO MODERATE	SEVERE
BABY BLUES	DEPRESSION/ ANXIETY	PUERPERAL PSYCHOSIS ¹ SEVERE DEPRESSION ² PSYCHOTIC DEPRESSION ³
INSOMNIA ^{1,2} EXHAUSTION TEARFULNESS CONFUSION ^{1,3} OVERWHELMED FEELINGS	DEPRESSED MOOD ^{2,3} TENSION IRRITABILITY LOST SEXUAL INTEREST PHYSICAL COMPLAINTS ² EXAGGERATED BABY BLUES	HALLUCINATION ¹ DELUSION ¹ VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR ^{1,3} AGITATION ¹ EXCESSIVE FATIGUE ² DISTORTION ³

ONSET

DAY 1 - WEEK 6	WEEK 6 - YEAR 1	DAY 3 - MONTH 1
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INCIDENCE

39% to 85%	10% to 15%	0.1% to 0.3%
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It is conservatively estimated that one in ten women will experience a mild to moderate reaction, while one in one thousand will react with a severe experience.

TREATMENTS AND DURATIONS

MILD	MILD TO MODERATE	SEVERE
EDUCATION SUPPORT SLEEP NUTRITION EXERCISE SHARING	EDUCATION SUPPORT SLEEP NUTRITION EXERCISE SHARING PROFESSIONAL CARE MEDICATION	EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL CARE HOSPITALIZATION SLEEP MEDICATION EXERCISE SHARING

The duration of the reaction to birth is dependent upon which part of the continuum is experienced, when it is recognized, and how it is treated. These variations also depend on previous postpartum experiences and treatments. The duration of distress will be affected by how well a woman responds to treatment and may last from days to years. **EVERYONE IS UNIQUE.**

CAUSES

The etiology is not known with certainty. Research has been conducted in two separate, related and equally important fields: physiology and psychology. A woman's body changes during pregnancy and postpartum. Internal and external stresses impact the woman. Theories abound, but conclusions do not, as yet, exist.

For further information about the research in this field, please contact the **MARCE SOCIETY:**

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This fact sheet is from a 45 minute presentation called "Postpartum Emotional Syndromes". Permission to copy may be obtained from the author.