



# spotlight on health

## Postpartum Depression: More Than The Baby Blues

(NAPSA)—How do you know whether it's a case of the “baby blues” or a case of postpartum depression? That's an important question that families are asking.

In America, about 50 to 70 percent of mothers experience a common, mild, limited period of depression called postpartum blues. But 10 to 20 percent of women experience a more severe, lasting depression called postpartum depression. This devastating illness can include feelings of hopelessness and inadequacy, and thoughts of suicide.

Although very serious, postpartum depression is easily treated. In order to get treatment, families must first recognize the symptoms, which can last from a few weeks to several months.

“Postpartum depression can be difficult to distinguish and tough to talk about,” said Lydia Lewis, Executive Director of the National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association. “It occurs at a time when women assume that they are supposed to be happy and they may be reluctant to say otherwise because of expectations that a baby's arrival is entirely a time of joy.”

According to National DMDA, some of the symptoms include:

- Feelings of sadness that won't go away
- Inability to sleep even when the baby is sleeping
- Irritability, anger, worry, agitation, anxiety
- Inability to concentrate or make decisions
- Lack of interest in the baby
- Uncontrollable crying
- Feelings of guilt or worthlessness



**Recognizing the signs of postpartum depression can be an important first step in getting help.**

- Feelings of hopelessness or despair
- Fear of being a bad mother, or that others think you are
- Fear that harm will come to the baby
- Thoughts of harming the baby or harming yourself
- Thoughts of death or suicide

The National DMDA has created a *Taking Care of Both of You: Understanding Mood Changes After the Birth of Your Baby* brochure to help mothers identify the symptoms, learn more about treatment options and learn how to approach the subject with their doctor.

The free pamphlet is available through healthcare providers, by calling 800/826-3632 or by visiting [www.ndmda.org](http://www.ndmda.org). This site also offers information on depression and bipolar illness.