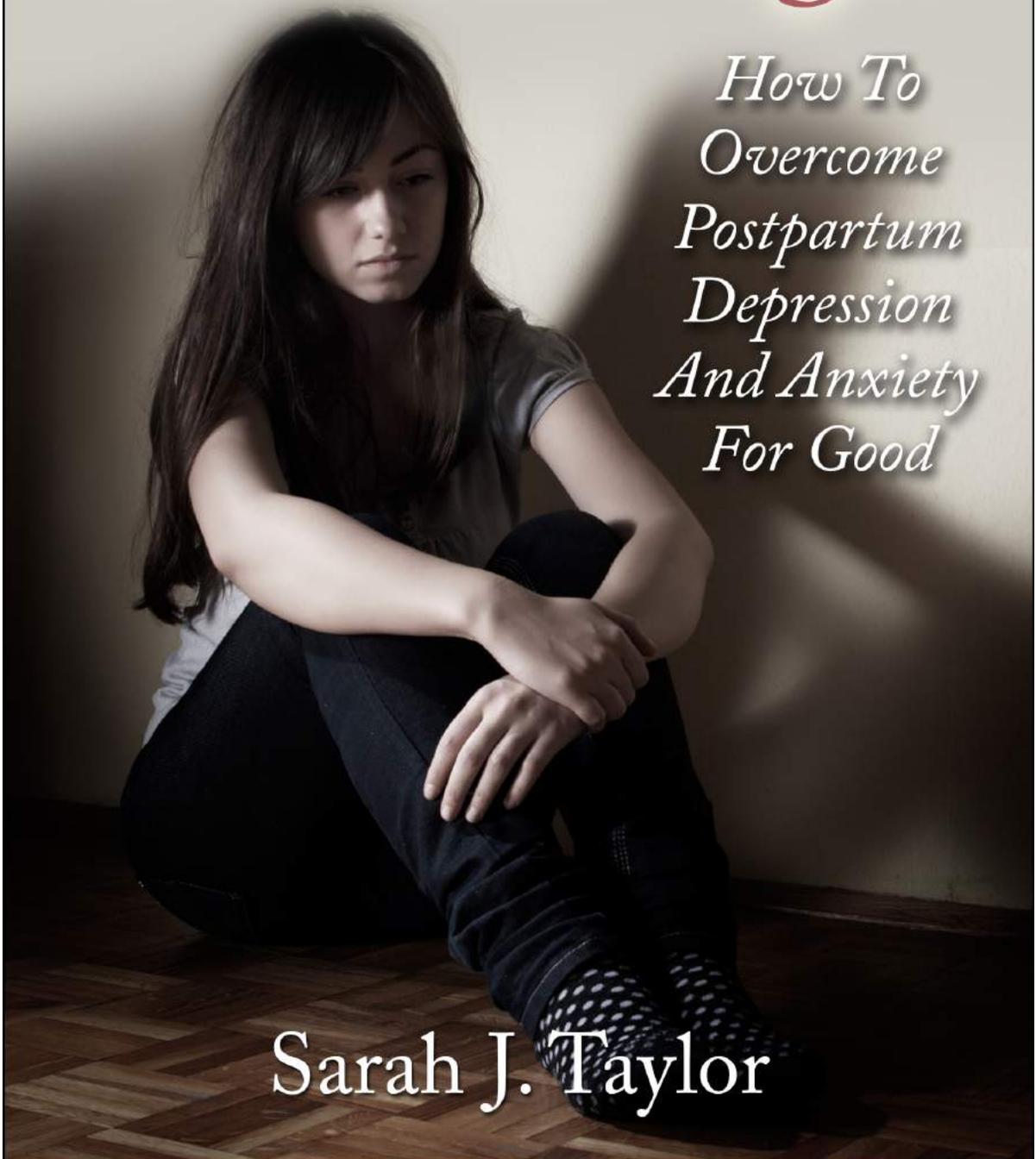


The Postpartum Depression Breakthrough

*How To
Overcome
Postpartum
Depression
And Anxiety
For Good*



Sarah J. Taylor

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Anxiety For Good*

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First Printing, 2014

Mother's Select

Sarah J. Taylor

PO Box 5731

Frisco, TX 75035

www.mothersselect.com

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What Is Postpartum Depression?

You would think that having a new baby is a joyous event for all families, and everyone would be happy. But that's not always the case, especially for mothers. Though having a baby is an exciting occasion, mothers can suffer quite a lot after giving birth. One of the common problems that 1 out of 10 mothers will face is postpartum depression.

Some may call it the “baby blues,” but postpartum depression is a serious condition that can last up to a year. Postpartum depression is a type of depression that happens after birth due to a chemical change in the brain. Most moms can suffer from a minor case of the baby blues since the body is still adjusting and changing after giving birth. But postpartum depression is a long-term condition.

In a general sense, depression happens when there's a chemical change in the brain. Since going through pregnancy and giving birth causes the body to go through many changes, depression can fall on mothers during and after pregnancy. Postpartum depression occurs after giving birth, and it can be a rough time for moms.

Although depression can be caused by chemical changes in the brain, there are also other causes of it, such as:

- Family history of postpartum depression or depression in general;
- Stressful or traumatic life events;
- Lack of support from family;

- Anxiety or negative feelings and thoughts about pregnancy and childbirth;
- Personal depression experience in the past;
- Low levels of thyroid hormones.

Each person has their own unique case of depression, so pinpointing a specific cause for postpartum depression depends on the individual.

Signs And Symptoms Of Postpartum Depression

Postpartum depression signs and symptoms vary among women. The list below show the different types of signs and symptoms that come with postpartum depression:

- Frequent crying;
- Persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, worthlessness, etc;
- Unable to concentrate completely;
- More indecisive than usual;
- Poor memory;
- Fatigue;
- Easy irritability;
- Insomnia;
- Intense anxiety based on thoughts and fears, such as constantly worrying about the baby being hurt in some way;
- Constant headaches;
- Hyperventilation;
- Lack of interest in hobbies, interests, the baby, family, etc.;

- Significant weight loss or weight gain;
- Lack of interest in sex;
- Afraid to lose control over certain aspects in life;
- Wanting to escape from reality;
- Becoming less social with friends and family;
- Thoughts of death or suicide.

As you can see, postpartum depression has many serious signs and symptoms. That's why it's important to pay attention to how you're feeling and thinking during pregnancy and after giving birth to your child. The earlier you identify that you have postpartum depression or even minor baby blues, the easier time you'll have overcoming this depression period.

FAQs About Postpartum Depression

Since postpartum depression is a concern for many mothers, it's natural to have questions about it. Postpartum depression is a serious health condition, so it's crucial that you know all you can about it. To provide you with more information about postpartum depression, let's go through FAQs that many people have asked about it and the answers to these common questions.

FAQ #1: Does postpartum depression affect my baby, too?

In most cases, yes, postpartum depression does affect your baby as well. Your baby is in the stage where he or she needs a lot of bonding, love, and affection. But postpartum depression can be a hindrance to your child's

growth and development. One of the common symptoms that mothers have when they're going through postpartum depression is detachment from the baby and family. That's why postpartum depression should be identified early on so you can find the help you need to overcome it sooner.

FAQ #2: What's the difference between baby blues and postpartum depression?

Baby blues occur during the first 1-2 weeks after giving birth, and the symptoms of baby blues peak in 3-5 days after birth. It's a short-term condition since the mother's body is adjusting and changing rapidly to get back into balance. In most cases, baby blues end after two weeks. The signs and symptoms of baby blues include:

- Crying easily and at random times;
- Sadness;
- Anxiety;
- Extreme empathy toward others;
- Serious mood swings;
- Having trouble sleeping, fatigue or insomnia;
- Easily frustrated.

Baby blues have similar signs and symptoms as postpartum depression, so it can be easy to mix the two up. However, keep in mind that the baby blues are short-term and usually come up during the first two weeks after giving birth. Most mothers – up to 80 percent – experience baby blues, but they get over it quickly.

Postpartum depression is long-term. It can occur right after baby blues or within 1-3 months after giving birth. If your baby blues extend longer than two weeks, you may be experiencing postpartum depression.

FAQ #3: How do I know if I have postpartum depression, even if I'm feeling normal?

Keep an eye on yourself after giving birth to your child, if possible. Pay attention to your emotions and thoughts to see if you're going through baby blues the first couple of weeks postpartum. Then, if you feel like there may be something wrong with you and notice that you're experiencing several signs and symptoms of postpartum depression, it's time to check with your doctor.

Mothers may worry about having postpartum depression, but they may not actually be going through it and feel perfectly fine. For instance, you may just feel temporarily overwhelmed with the new baby in your family and need a small break to get yourself back in order. But if you notice a change in your behavior and mood that seems to last longer than a few days or couple of weeks, you may be going through baby blues and developing postpartum depression.

If you're not going through postpartum depression symptoms, then don't worry about it. However, don't let yourself suppress any suspicions, either. Confirm it with yourself and your instincts, and consult your doctor if you're truly concerned about postpartum depression. Denial can cause possible postpartum depression to worsen and make it harder for you to overcome

later on. It may be hard to admit it to yourself, but you're only putting your and your family's health and happiness on the line if you don't treat postpartum depression right away. If you're going through postpartum depression, it's okay – many other moms are going through it, too.

FAQ #4: Will postpartum depression go away on its own?

Although postpartum depression deals with mainly a chemical change in the brain, it doesn't mean that it'll go away over time on its own. Some people think that depression is something that can be cured by thinking positively and shifting focus. But depression is much deeper than that. Depression won't go away on its own, and it requires professional help most of the time. You'll learn more about treatment options in the next section.

FAQ #5: Why do I have postpartum depression?

Realize that it's not your fault that you have postpartum depression. It's caused by several factors, and it's common among moms. Having postpartum depression doesn't mean that you're going to ruin your child or ruin yourself. It doesn't mean that it has to be a prison for life. You're not a bad mother because you have postpartum depression.

Postpartum depression is a mood disorder where you'll experience many types of negative emotions and thoughts. Your behavior will change as well when you have postpartum depression. But know that all this is treatable and curable. You *can* overcome this. It takes time and effort, but in the end,

you'll be a much happier person once you rise above postpartum depression.

FAQ #6: When will my postpartum depression go away?

It's hard to say because every mom is different. Some moms may overcome postpartum depression sooner than others. But what you should do is focus on you and your treatment. You don't have to compare yourself to other moms. In fact, comparing can worsen your postpartum depression. Just focus on yourself. Focus on the quality of treatment you're getting and the quality you're putting into your treatment rather than how long it will take for you to be treated completely.

FAQ #7: If I have postpartum depression, does it mean that I'm a bad, lazy or weak mom?

Absolutely not! Postpartum depression isn't your fault. All you're accountable for is how you deal with it and if you decide to deal with it effectively. It has nothing to do with who you are as a woman or a mother. Postpartum depression happens to many women from all walks of life, so there's no need to judge yourself or put yourself down because of this condition. It doesn't mean that you're not normal, either. Don't blame yourself for this health condition.

FAQ #8: What are the risks of postpartum depression?

If left untreated, postpartum depression can raise several complications later on in your life, including the following:

- Difficulty bonding with your children when they're older;
- Family problems;
- Children having behavior problems;
- Can turn into a chronic depression problem that lasts longer than a year;
- Increases the chances of future depression in other areas of your life.

Again: The sooner you treat postpartum depression, the better it is for you and your family.

FAQ #9: How can I prevent postpartum depression?

If you're reading this e-book guide before giving birth or pregnancy, or if you're reading this e-book guide because you're concerned that you may be on the verge of postpartum depression, there may be a chance for you to prevent it. Here are several tips to prevent postpartum depression:

- **Don't have high expectations.** Unfortunately, media and society has placed this image that motherhood is perfect, fun, and amazing – and it can be! But they don't mention that motherhood can be difficult, too. Also, if you have high, unrealistic expectations about childbirth as well, lower them or get rid of them completely. Postpartum depression or baby blues can be caused by high expectations soon-to-be mothers have about motherhood and childbirth. Motherhood can both be rewarding and intense, and so can childbirth. They're both raw and real. Review your expectations about motherhood and childbirth. If they're unrealistic, make them real or don't have

expectations at all. Bearing a child, giving birth, and being a mother are all very deep experiences, so don't let expectations ruin them for you.

- **Have your support system in place.** During your pregnancy, get your support system in place and make sure it's there after you've given birth. You're going through lots of experiences when you're pregnant and giving birth, so support should be one of the top must-haves on your list as a soon-to-be mother. One of the possible causes of postpartum depression is not having enough support. That's why it's important to know who you're going to turn to when you need a break from motherhood. Also, you should prepare for emergencies as well. If you need to have someone else watch your baby for a little bit, you need to know who will help you during those times. This will help reduce stress and frustration for you, ultimately lowering the risk of postpartum depression.
- **Get into prenatal exercise.** It's no secret that exercising does wonders for your mind and body, and it can keep postpartum depression at bay as well. Even if you're pregnant, you can still work out and fight off postpartum depression. Talk to your doctor about exercise first before you attempt any workout routine. If you're not pregnant yet, get into workout mode now so you can develop an exercising habit that will benefit you down the road.
- **Learn how to relax and relieve stress.** One of the symptoms that can actually be a cause for postpartum depression is anxiety. If you tend to get easily stressed out and have less control over your emotions, right now is the best time to figure out what will relax you. When you become pregnant or are about to give birth, it's good to

have a few relaxing tricks up your sleeve. You never know when you're going to need them. Meditation, yoga, reading, writing, and listening to soothing music are just a handful of ways to relax and relieve stress.

- **Get more sleep.** You may think that you'll be losing tons of sleep when your baby arrives, but that's not true at all. You can get more sleep – you just have to make time for it and look for opportunities to get more sleep, such as when your baby is napping during the day. Sleep is important for you as well as your little one. Fatigue is one of the symptoms of postpartum depression, so get as much sleep as you can to avoid falling prey to this condition.
- **Face your fears and concerns.** If you're worrying about events that haven't even happened in your life yet, it's not going to do any good for you. Most fears stem from not knowing what's going to happen in the future and being afraid of failing. Face your fears now because they can be the core of your postpartum depression. Talk to your spouse, other family members, and friends for support to get you through your fears. It can be tough confronting your fears, but doing this now will help you in the future. If it helps, focus on the present. Right now, none of your fears are happening. You have nothing to fear in this moment.
- **Let go of wanting control.** When a baby comes into your life, it's time to say goodbye to your old one. Your regular routines will change a lot when a baby enters the picture, so be flexible and stop trying to stay in your comfort zone. That only makes you want to control everything to stay in your comfort zone, but you'll only stress yourself out. Let go of wanting control, and be more flexible. Your life

can get unpredictable when you have your baby, so expect to change a lot of your routine life before your tot came into the family.

FAQ #10: Is postpartum depression treatable?

Yes, it is! In the next section, you'll find out the postpartum depression help options for you.

How To Overcome Postpartum Depression

Two different types of general solutions are available for postpartum depression: self-help and professional help. In this section, we'll go through more specific solutions for each category. Make notes while you're reading if anything jumps out at you. Every mother is different, and dealing with postpartum depression varies among individuals. Don't think that you *have to* do a certain solution in order to overcome your postpartum depression. Now, let's get started!

Self-Help Treatments and Tips

First off, let's go over the self-treatments and self-help tips that you can do without aid from a specialist. For many moms, overcoming depression can be easily done with just themselves. (Of course, it's always beneficial to get more information from your doctor!) Here are several ways for you to be your own superwoman and overcome this condition:

1. Keep yourself healthy. Healthy foods and healthy lifestyle choices will help make you feel better about yourself and your life. Knowing that you're

being healthy is a great way to boost your confidence and your mood. You should keep a healthy diet and reduce the amount of processed, junk, and fast food you have in your diet. Also, it's highly recommended that you workout, even if it's light yoga or walking. Due to postpartum depression, you may not feel up to exercising, but it can help lift your mood thanks to endorphins.

2. Face any disappointments you have. If you entered motherhood thinking that it would come naturally to you when you had a baby, think again. The only natural part of motherhood is giving birth to your child. After that, the emotional and mental part of yourself cannot catch up physically. Physically and biologically, you're a mother; but the other parts of motherhood don't have a switch that you can flip on and off.

If you expected motherhood would come naturally to you after having a child and got very disappointed that it wasn't that way at all, it's time to go about this situation another way. It's time to educate yourself about motherhood, so pick up books and courses that you think will help you on your journey. You can ask other people for advice, but take it with a few grains of salt. Not everyone is going to be like you and your child, and only you know what's best for you and your baby. Educating yourself, though, can lead you to the right motherhood path for you. If you didn't take the time to educate yourself and at least know what to do in certain situations, you can increase your chances of worsening your postpartum depression.

This doesn't mean it's your fault, though. Motherhood can be unpredictable! Sometimes, many moms think that they've got it down by watching other moms be moms. Though it's unpleasant to be met with disappointment when reality sets in, you can turn this whole thing around and make it more bearable for you and your family.

First, listen to your instincts. Observe your baby. Make notes about any certain behavior he or she does that indicates something. For instance, if your baby gets hungry and rubs his or her mouth to indicate that, then make a note of that. That's a sign that *your* baby is hungry. Other babies may cry or do something else to communicate that they're hungry, but your child may not do the same action the other babies do. That's why it's important to focus on your child and listen to your instincts.

Sometimes, for most moms, what they read in books or hear from others may not be the right information for them. However, this doesn't mean that you shouldn't at least be aware of all the basics of motherhood and parenting. The stress that you may be under after giving birth can be because you had a lot of great expectations about motherhood, and that can cause your postpartum depression. Educate yourself now, but also keep an open mind – not everything is going to be in books.

If you have other disappointments that you've had after having your baby, face them now. With postpartum depression, it's hard to not sink in to your disappointments. But if you want to get out of your depression, you have to face your disappointments. Don't think that you've failed, though. Mistakes

and disappointments are going to happen when you're a mother, but they're red flags to tell you that something has to be done differently to make it better.

3. Educate yourself. Although it was mentioned in the previous tip, it needs its own number! Educating yourself about parenthood, motherhood, and caring for your baby is essential. Yes, there are tons of books out there on these subjects, and there are also many specialists who can help you through your parenting journey. Remember that you're handling another human being when you have a baby. You don't know exactly how things are going to turn out because every person and every baby is their own individual. You'll get to know your baby over time, and it's important for you to understand the various ways to handle all types of babies. You never know when your child will change a routine you've set, so that's why the more you know, the more flexible you'll be with your child.

Many moms go into motherhood expecting that things will be easy and natural, but it's not always sunshines and rainbows. There are many shades to parenting and taking care of a child. It's impossible to pinpoint every detail because only you will know that about your baby, and that's why you need to also educate yourself by observing your little one. Books can't always tell you what to expect, so that's why you should also expect the unexpected. Be open-minded. Limiting yourself to what you hear or read will only cause you to feel disappointment and worsen your postpartum depression.

4. Simplify your life. Yes, with a baby in your home now, simplifying your life sounds like a paradox, but it can be done. Your baby is going to be a handful, so you want to simplify your life as much as possible. Having too much going on in your life is just going to stress you out and frustrate you, which can take postpartum depression to another level. Check out how you can simplify your life before your baby's arrival or even after your baby has arrived below:

- **Take off work.** If possible, take off work for a while. Taking care of your child and doing any work assignments is going to wear you down quickly. It's highly recommended that you save up at least six months' worth of expenses, too, so you have a security fund to fall back on when your baby arrives. If you can do that now before your baby arrives, do it. Make sure to include expenses for your baby as well to the security fund. Right now, your job is to take care of your baby. Parenting is a 24/7 job, and taking off work for a while will make it much easier for you.
- **Put other activities on hold.** If you used to go out a lot with friends and family members or do a lot of other personal hobbies, reduce the time you spend on these activities. This doesn't mean that you can't do things for yourself. In fact, taking a break and having you time is fantastic and beneficial for your health. But you may have to reduce the time you spend on your favorite activities when your baby comes into your life. You can always pick them up again when your baby becomes more independent and you have an easier time raising him or her.

- **Stay organized.** From your chores to your baby's feeding schedule, various aspects of your life should have an organization system in place. Plan organization ahead of time so you know what to do to keep your life in order. Organization will reduce frustration, anxieties, and stress, which are symptoms of postpartum depression. The less you have, the better you'll feel in the end. Find parts in your life that you can organize now and continue to maintain it.
- **Create a weekly schedule.** Know when you're going grocery shopping. Know when you're paying your bills. Know when you have to go to the doctor's. Write everything down that you need to do for the week on one day out of the week, such as Sunday. If you can do without certain activities for the week, let go of them for now.

5. Be real with yourself. If you have any expectations about yourself, your baby, parenting, and anything else that has to deal with your life now as a mother, think them over. Be real about them. Are they true expectations that you believe can be reached, or are they expectations someone else has put on you? Are you afraid to be judged or fail if you don't have such expectations?

Becoming a mother is a major change in a woman's life. To add to that, you won't be the same person you were before once you've become a mother. That's a scary thought for many, but realize this: You're going to grow and learn so much more about yourself when you are a mother. Expectations don't do anything for you if you'll only end up disappointed and limiting

yourself. Let go of any unrealistic expectations you have about motherhood and taking care of your child.

Disappointments from expectations can lead to postpartum depression. Anxieties can arise from these disappointments, making postpartum depression worse for you. When you realize that the expectations you have don't get met, that's when fear and anxiety settle in. Expectations are what you've known for a long time now, and you believed in them. It's natural to feel disappointed and anxious when you don't see things playing out the way you saw it in your mind before you had your baby. That's why expectations can be a double-edged sword, and it's always safer to release those unrealistic expectations you have.

6. Don't isolate yourself. Isolation can make postpartum depression harder to handle for you and others around you, so make an effort to reach out to the people closest to you; your spouse, especially. Even though postpartum depression may make you feel like you can't connect with others or feel like you want to be separated from them, you don't have to follow what you feel all the time. Emotions come and go, and they don't have to rule how you think or behave. Continue connecting with your spouse, family, friends, and baby even through postpartum depression.

It may sound like you're forcing yourself to do something you don't feel like doing, but if you truly want to get out of your postpartum depression, isolation isn't going to help you at all. You'll only dig yourself deeper into it and make it harder to get out of later on.

7. Avoid procrastinating your treatment. You may feel lethargic and apathetic during postpartum depression, but it's important to not delay your treatment. You may not feel like getting treated now, but deep down, you know that staying in your postpartum depression will jeopardize many parts of your life and yourself. The more you put off treatment for postpartum depression, the harder time you'll have getting out of it. Whether you use self-help treatment options or professional help, you must not deny or delay that you do need to take care of your postpartum depression. You deserve happiness, and treating your postpartum depression will get you closer to it.

Postpartum Professional Help Options

For many moms who suffer from postpartum depression, they do choose to go to specialists to help them with their condition. Read through the list below to get an idea of what professional help options are out there for you:

1. Individual or Family Therapy

Individual or family therapy can be a great way to overcome your postpartum depression. With individual therapy, you get one-on-one time with a professional who knows what you're going through and can help you through the depression. With family therapy, it can help you and your family go through this tough period because postpartum depression can affect your family as well.

If you go for individual or family therapy, make sure to find a specialist who has experience in dealing with clients or patients who have had postpartum depression. The more experience he or she has, the better understanding

he or she will have about your condition. Also, the quality of treatment can be at a higher level if the therapist has a lot of experience in the postpartum depression area.

Here are a few types of individual therapies you can consider:

- **Cognitive Therapy** – This type of therapy deals with behavior and how the person thinks that can affect his or her behavior. Cognitive therapy focuses on alleviating postpartum depression by helping an individual change the way he or she thinks.
- **Interpersonal Therapy** – This type of therapy helps an individual with depression to find better, more specific ways to cope with his or her depression.
- **Psychotherapy** – Also known as talk therapy, this type of therapy is where an individual and the therapist talk about the patient's problems and figure out solutions. Psychotherapy is very effective since it can help change the chemical balance in the brain and relieve depression.

2. Hormone Therapy

From pregnancy to birth, your hormones are all over the place. The chemical change in your brain during this time can be a main cause of postpartum depression. That's why hormone therapy can be a beneficial option for you to help deal with your postpartum depression.

For women, hormone therapy involves estrogen replacement. During childbirth and after childbirth, estrogen levels drop drastically, which can increase your chances of postpartum depression. Hormone therapy is believed to help with the symptoms of postpartum depression and reduce the risk of postpartum depression. Sometimes, hormone therapy is combined with antidepressants for a better treatment. Make sure to talk to your doctor if you're considering hormone therapy.

3. Antidepressants

Postpartum depression is an extension of depression that occurs after childbirth, so antidepressants can work to ease postpartum depression. However, please note that the ingredients in antidepressants can pass on to your baby if you're breastfeeding. There are antidepressants available that you can take while breastfeeding, so consult with your doctor about the different antidepressants that are available as well as the risks that come with taking antidepressants.

On rare and extreme occasions, your doctor may require you to be hospitalized if he or she believes you need more intensive care. For any type of medical or professional treatment, always talk to your doctor about the best treatment for you. A combination of treatments – both self-help and professional help – can be the most effective way for you to overcome your postpartum depression.

Life After Postpartum Depression

Postpartum depression is a serious health condition that not only takes a toll on you, but also on your family. It's always best to treat any health conditions you have to ensure that you have a fulfilling and happy life ahead of you with your family. Overcoming postpartum depression is going to be a battle, but you're going to make it through. Countless women have made it through postpartum depression with all their limbs intact, and that means you can get cure it, too.

Don't hide your postpartum depression – reach out to others, and don't isolate yourself. Many women are going through similar experiences. You aren't crazy nor are you a terrible mother. Know that postpartum depression happens to many moms, and know that you can overcome it and be a stronger woman because of it.

Whether you're going through it now or you've already beaten postpartum depression, you have a story to tell that will resonate with many moms out there. You can heal, and you can come out from postpartum depression. It's not your prison, and it's not your fault. Don't suffer alone. You have more support out there than you think!

(If you're just educating yourself about the signs and symptoms of postpartum depression, continue educating yourself of all the possible disorders and health conditions that you may go through during pregnancy and childbirth. The more you know, the more prepared you'll be!)

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