

# Tips for Supporting Partners & Family Members with Postpartum Depression

If you are feeling overwhelmed or want support now, call or text the **National Maternal Mental Health Hotline** at **1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)**. TTY users can use a preferred relay service or dial **711** and then **1-833-852-6262**.

If you are in mental health distress or a suicidal crisis, call or text the **Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** at **988** for free and confidential support.

Postpartum depression (PPD) is a common mental health condition. About **1 in 8 women report symptoms** of PPD in the year after giving birth.

If you have a family member or partner experiencing symptoms of PPD, you can play a big role in their path to healing. Your support and care are very important, even if the person is not in a place where they can express or communicate that to you. Patience and understanding are key to providing continued support.

This guide offers tips on how to support your partner or family member along their healing journey. It also includes tips to help you stay healthy while you continue to support them.



## Create a Supportive Environment for Your Partner or Family Member

There are many ways to support them through their PPD journey.

- **Support them in getting uninterrupted periods of sleep that balances recovery with the need to breastfeed on schedule.** Keep the baby nearby to make overnight feeding more convenient.
- **Encourage them to take time for self-care.** Let them take breaks while you care for the baby. Take on household tasks that need to be done, such as cleaning, picking up groceries or baby supplies, and preparing meals.
- **Encourage them to eat regularly and drink plenty of water.** Try to incorporate protein into every meal and keep healthy, easy-to-eat snacks on hand. Drinking water regularly also helps to support their health and their milk supply.



## Start the Conversation

If you're concerned that your family member or partner has PPD, try to discuss this with them in an empathetic and nonjudgmental way.

- **Pick your time and place.** Find a quiet and comfortable spot where you can talk without distractions.
- **Focus the conversation on them.** Be clear that you want to know what they need and how you can best provide support.
- **Listen closely to their needs, fears, and frustrations.** Using "I" statements can help avoid conflict. Listen without interrupting, and be calm, supportive, and open to compromise. Express your care and concern and avoid blaming or judging.
- **Keep the lines of communication open.** Be patient and calm even when the conversation is difficult. If they are angry or upset and no longer want to talk, take a break and pick up the conversation later.
- **Ask how you can help.** If they don't know, you can make some suggestions or wait while they assess their needs. Respect that they may not be ready to accept or know how they need help.





## Take Care of Yourself

It's important to take care of yourself while you're supporting someone you care about with PPD. This will help you to be as present and empathetic as possible. Self-care is especially important if you're balancing the challenges of caring for a new baby with being a supportive partner.

- **Remember to eat regularly.** Nutritious meals will give you the energy you need to meet the day's challenges.
- **Sleep is important.** Get as much sleep as possible while still providing overnight care for the baby.
- **Ask family, friends, and other trusted individuals for specific types of help.** Do not be afraid to say "yes" if someone offers to lend a hand.
- **Seek out community support.** There are groups — locally and online — that provide support for people with PPD and their supporters. They can provide information, comfort, and understanding.

- **Get help to cope with your emotions and challenges.** Mental health professionals, counselors, and partner support groups are good care and support resources.
- **Spend time with the baby.** Not only will this give your family member a break, but it will also build your confidence as a parent or family caregiver.
- Text or call the **National Maternal Mental Health Hotline (1-833-TLC-MAMA)** for PPD information, resources, and support groups for women, partners, and supporters. The hotline also provides 24/7 free access to professional counselors. If you're deaf or hard of hearing, use your preferred relay service or **dial 711**, then **1-833-852-6262**. Language translation and interpretation services are available.

### Need more information?

Visit [www.womenshealth.gov/talkingPPD/toolkit](http://www.womenshealth.gov/talkingPPD/toolkit) for additional PPD and self-care resources.