



POSTPARTUM SUPPORT
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Postpartum Psychosis

Psychosis

Postpartum Psychosis is a rare illness, compared to the rates of postpartum depression or anxiety. It occurs in approximately 1 to 2 out of every 1,000 deliveries, or approximately .1% of births. The onset is usually sudden, most often within the first 2 weeks postpartum.

Symptoms

Symptoms of postpartum psychosis can include:

- Delusions or strange beliefs
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that aren't there)
- Feeling very irritated
- Hyperactivity
- Decreased need for or inability to sleep
- Paranoia and suspiciousness
- Rapid mood swings
- Difficulty communicating at times

The most significant risk factors for postpartum psychosis are a personal or family

history of bipolar disorder, or a previous psychotic episode.

Of the women who develop a postpartum psychosis, research has suggested that there is approximately a 5% suicide rate and a 4% infanticide rate associated with the illness. This is because the woman experiencing psychosis is experiencing a break from reality. In her psychotic state, the delusions and beliefs make sense to her; they feel very real to her and are often religious. Immediate treatment for a woman going through psychosis is imperative.

It is also important to know that many survivors of postpartum psychosis never had delusions containing violent commands. Delusions take many forms, and not all of them are destructive. Most women who experience postpartum psychosis do not harm themselves or anyone else. However, there is always the risk of danger because psychosis includes delusional thinking and irrational judgment, and this is why women with this illness must be quickly assessed, treated, and carefully monitored by a trained healthcare perinatal mental health professional.

Postpartum psychosis is temporary and treatable with professional help, but it is an emergency and it is essential that you receive immediate help. If you feel you or someone you know may be suffering from this illness, know that it is not your fault and you are not to blame. Call your doctor or an [emergency crisis hotline right away](#) so that you can get the help you need.

PSI also has a **Postpartum Psychosis Coordinator** to provide additional assistance to women and families who are not in an emergency situation. Contact **Michele Davidson**, at **703-729-4462**, at michelerdavidson@gmail.com

Links for more Information and Resources -

With Thanks to APP-Network!

- [Action on Postpartum Psychosis -Insider Guide Recovery](#)
- [Action on Postpartum Psychosis – Insider Guide for Partners](#)
- [Action on Postpartum Psychosis – Planning Pregnancy Guide for Women at High Risk of PP](#)
- [PSI Bookstore](#) for books on postpartum mental health, including postpartum psychosis for providers, advocates, and families
- [PP Psychosis Books Resources and Creative Media](#)

Help in an Emergency

Emergency Hotlines are available all the time. It is very important that you reach out right now and find the support and information you need to be safe.

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