

The Postpartum Depression Cheat Sheet For Husbands

Everything I learned from my wife and I's experience with postpartum depression, all in one place. Learn how to love and support your wife, even when she's going through the valley.

*Estimated Reading Time:
10 minutes*

Who is this for?

This guide is for any new father who wants to help his wife as much as he can.

Whether you only suspect postpartum depression, or you know for a fact that it's something your wife is dealing with, this short cheat sheet will be your guide to loving and supporting your wife the way she needs.

Here's What You'll Learn In This Quick Guide:

- An overview of the **signs of postpartum depression** you may be seeing from your wife.
- Quick stats about PPD, including **estimated recovery time**.
- **Big picture advice** to help you be the husband that your wife needs.
- Specific do's and don'ts to **help your wife survive the worst episodes** of postpartum depression.
- How to tell her you believe she has postpartum depression without making things worse.

If you want more in-depth information on any one of these areas, be sure to read the two-part series over on Husband Help Haven. I'll go ahead and link those to you below:

Part 1.

[9 Signs My Wife Had Postpartum Depression](#)

(includes more PPD stats and details for telling your wife)

Part 2.

[How To Help Your Wife With Postpartum Depression](#)

(includes advice for both big picture mindset and dealing with the bad episodes)

Signs Of Postpartum Depression

1. **She feels hopeless**, like parenting is never going to get better.
2. **She has low self-worth**; she feels like a terrible mother, like nothing she does is ever good enough.
3. **Short temper or rage**, maybe you've never seen your wife get so angry, so often.
4. **She's feels no connection** to the baby or to you. She may say that she doesn't love the baby or you.
5. **She constantly looks sad** and lonely, no matter how much time you spend with her. She feels isolated. She's crying multiple times per week.
6. **She regrets having a baby**, often talking about how much she wishes she could go back to life before being a mother.
7. **She threatens to run away**, or you get a nagging feeling that she might actually try to escape the family.

Below are signs of postpartum psychosis -- Get help ASAP!

8. **Suicidal thoughts.** If she talks specifically about ending her life, especially if she has a method in mind, urge her to get help.
9. She has **thoughts of harming the baby**, or feels like she has moments where she is physically out of control.

Big Picture Mindset Advice

When your wife is having a really depressed day...

**Do NOT Try To
"Fix It"...**

Just Validate Her Feelings, Listen Patiently
& Gently Offer To Help

1. **Don't try to fix it**; it's not yours to fix.
2. **Get professional help**, individual counseling is great.
3. ... And **don't wait** to get professional help!
4. **Help her as much as you can**, any way that you can think of.
5. Tell her honestly that she's doing a good job.
6. ... And not just when she needs the encouragement; encourage all the time.
7. Pick your battles and **respect her limits**.
8. **Forgive, forgive, forgive!**
9. Forgive yourself too, **this is really hard**.
10. **Take care of yourself** so you can stay happy, helpful and patient.

Do's & Don'ts For The Bad Days...

The hardest thing to remember during an episode of postpartum depression...

Doing The "Right Thing" Will NOT Feel Better In The Moment

It Won't Go Away Immediately,
So Don't Expect It To

1. **DO** validate how she's feeling right now.
DON'T try to tell her, "It's not that bad."
2. **DO** be patient with her
DON'T try to force the mood to go away
3. **DO** offer to help or give her a break
DON'T force her to accept your offer
4. **DO** stay calm and level-headed
DON'T let yourself say anything out of anger
5. **DO** ask to use a tool from counseling
DON'T tell her which tool she should be using
6. **DO** be honest, gently
DON'T constantly hide your feelings
7. **DO** let her cry or be alone or express her feelings how she wants
DON'T make her feel like she's not allowed to feel bad

Things getting really bad?

It's okay to insist on watching the baby while she takes some space.

Other Stuff To Know

Postpartum Depression Stats n' Facts

Postpartum depression is considered a **mental illness**

It affects **15% to 20% of new moms**, although not always after their first child.

Only **15%** of PPD sufferers will ever seek treatment.

The textbook would tell you PPD will **last up to 12 months**, but many women suffer for longer than 12 months...

Between our bio daughter and our former foster son, my wife struggled with PPD for a **total of ~2 years**.

Symptoms vary widely, especially if you include postpartum anxiety and postpartum psychosis. *Long story short, if it feels like something is wrong, it probably is.*

Solutions: medication, counseling, healthy lifestyle, lots of sleep and most of all, lots of support.

How To Tell Your Wife She Might Have PPD

- Do NOT share your suspicions in the middle of an episode.
- Don't outright tell her that she has postpartum depression. That will feel like an accusation. Do it in a way that encourages her to actually think about whether she might have PPD or not.
- Be as gentle and non-judgmental as you can.
- Make sure she knows that you respect her self-awareness; you know that she knows her body and herself best, and that ultimately you respect her judgment.
- Have a solution ready; know the next step that you would like her to take.

What Now?

My wife's postpartum depression was one of the hardest things we've had to deal with in our marriage.

There were two major turning points:

1. When my wife realized she had postpartum depression. That gave us a tangible 'thing' to focus on.
2. When she started seeing a counselor with PPD experience. That gave her the tools to manage the bad days.

Your job during this time is not to fix your wife's PPD for her. It is her journey, and your responsibility is simply to love her, support her and show her lots of patience.

“You have the ability to be your wife's biggest source of hope and encouragement.”

That's not to say you're powerless in all of this... On the contrary, you have the ability to be your wife's biggest source of hope and encouragement.

If postpartum depression is new to you, or if you don't think your wife knows she might be dealing with it, start planning a conversation with her.

If your wife knows she has PPD, I hope this guide helped you understand how you can better love and help her during this time.

Much manly love,
- Stephen

