The motherhood challenge: confronting mental health in Utah's moms

Perinatal mental health refers to mental health conditions that happen during or after pregnancy. It can include depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and psychosis.

How many women have a perinatal mental health condition?

- **1 in 3** Utah women experience depression or anxiety during pregnancy or after giving birth.
- **13%** of Utah women had symptoms of depression during their pregnancy, **16%** had symptoms of anxiety, and **16%** had symptoms of postpartum depression—higher than national averages (2023).
- **Mental health conditions and substance use disorders** are the most common contributing factors in maternal deaths in Utah.

80%

The "baby blues" affect up to 80% of new moms. The baby blues can cause mild mood changes that usually resolve in a couple of weeks. If symptoms last longer than 2 weeks, it may indicate something is more and additional help is needed.

Mom and baby both benefit when perinatal mental health conditions are treated appropriately.

- Decreases the risk of self-harm, substance use, and suicide.
- Strengthens the emotional bond between parent and baby, affecting attachment & trust.
- Helps promote healthy development and positive behavior in children.
- Reduces family conflict and stress.
- Makes it easier for parents to manage their daily responsibilities and take care of themselves.

Treatment can and does help.

- **Self-care** is a daily habit that keeps your body and mind healthy. Be sure to make time for small things that help you feel better.
- **Peer & social support** connects you with people who truly understand what you're going through. Finding your community can make you feel less alone and more empowered.
- **Therapy** provides a safe, confidential space to process your feelings and learn coping skills. It's a proactive step toward feeling like yourself again.
- **Medication** can also help you feel better. A doctor can help you know which medicine may work best and is safe to take during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Where can I get help?

- **Utah Maternal Mental Health Referral Network** has a list of healthcare providers who specialize in perinatal mental health.
- **Postpartum Support International (PSI) Utah Chapter**, provides education and community support.
- **988** is a free, confidential helpline.. Trained crisis workers are available 24/7 to provide emotional and mental health support.

Visit https://mihp.utah.gov/maternal-mental-health for more information

Utah Department of Health & Human Services