

Postpartum Counseling Checklist: Messages for New Mothers About Emotional Health

- Nutrition, caloric requirements “Baby blues” and anxiety are common in the first week postpartum
- Postpartum mood changes are not the fault of the mother
- Nutritional adjustment, sleep, and exercise may help in managing mood swings
- Awareness of predisposing risk factors may help mothers identify symptoms earlier
- Timeframe for postpartum mood disorders
 - “Blues” peak approximately three to five days postpartum and disappear within a couple of weeks after the baby is born
 - Postpartum depression usually develops within the first three months postpartum but may occur later (up to one year after childbirth)
 - Incidence of psychosis peaks within the first few weeks after childbirth
- Effective strategies exist for preventing and managing postpartum mood disorders
- Early identification of postpartum mood disorders is important
- Reassurance of support and adequate resources and appropriate referral will mitigate risk