

branches & blossoms

Where strength branches out and joy blooms

CCYSB YOUTH SUICIDE INTERVENTION & PREVENTION SERVICES

JULY 2026

Understanding Hormones & Mood After Birth

After birth, the body undergoes one of the most rapid hormonal shifts experienced in human physiology. These changes affect mood, sleep, anxiety levels, and emotional sensitivity.

Understanding the biological component of postpartum mood can reduce shame and increase compassion.

What Happens to Hormones After Birth?

Immediately after delivery:

- Estrogen levels drop dramatically
 - During pregnancy, estrogen (mainly estradiol) plays a role in fetal development, uterine growth & expansion, placental blood flow, mammary gland development, and allows the uterus to contract to prepare for labor.
- Progesterone decreases rapidly.
 - Progesterone is essential in preparing the uterus for pregnancy, maintaining early stages of pregnancy, and supporting fetal growth.
- Oxytocin fluctuates.
 - Oxytocin is essential for preparing the uterus for labor, driving effective contractions, supporting breastfeeding, preventing postpartum hemorrhage, and fostering maternal-infant bonding.
- Prolactin shifts with feeding.
 - Prolactin plays a vital role in pregnancy by facilitating breast development and milk production.
- Cortisol levels adjust.
 - Cortisol plays a central role in regulating blood sugar, blood pressure, immune function, and the body's stress response.

These hormonal shifts occur alongside:

- Physical recovery
- Sleep disruption
- New responsibilities
- Emotional adjustment

The result is a body and brain recalibrating quickly.



What's Inside:

Understanding Hormones
& Mood After Birth

Helpline & Crisis
Resources

How Loved Ones
Can Support Maternal
Mental Health

A Mindful Moment



Scan to learn more about
Suicide Intervention &
Prevention @ CCYSB !

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Understanding Hormones & Mood After Birth

The "Baby Blues"

Up to 80% of parents experience the "baby blues" within the first two weeks postpartum and are considered a normal part of adjusting to motherhood. The primary cause is the sudden drop in pregnancy hormones after delivery, combined with fatigue, physical recovery, and the stress of caring for a newborn. Symptoms may include:

- Feeling tearful or sad without a clear reason
- Mood swings and irritability
- Sensitivity – feeling inadequate or guilty
- Anxiety or feeling overwhelmed

These symptoms are usually temporary and improve within two weeks.

When It's More Than Hormones

If symptoms:

- Last longer than two weeks
- Intensify instead of improve
- Include hopelessness or panic
- Interfere with functioning

It may indicate postpartum depression or anxiety. Hormones can trigger vulnerability, but they are not the only cause.

Genetics, sleep, stress, trauma history, and support systems all interact.

Hormones and Anxiety

Hormonal fluctuations can increase:

- Physical restlessness
- Racing thoughts
- Hypervigilance
- Emotional sensitivity

These symptoms can feel frightening if unexpected.

Reducing Self-Blame

It can be helpful to remind yourself:

- "My body is adjusting."
- "Hormones influence mood."
- "This doesn't mean I'm failing."

Biology does not excuse harmful behavior, but it does explain why emotions may feel intensified.

Supporting Hormonal Adjustment

Helpful supports include:

- Consistent meals
- Hydration
- Rest when possible
- Emotional validation
- Professional support if needed

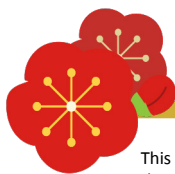
If symptoms feel unmanageable, treatment is available. Medication, therapy, and community support can all help stabilize mood.

A Compassionate Perspective

Hormones are powerful — but they are not destiny.

If you are struggling, it is not because you are weak. It may be because your body and brain are undergoing significant change.

Support during this time is not a luxury — it is care.



Helplines & Crisis Resources

This newsletter is for educational and supportive purposes, not a substitute for mental health diagnosis or treatment. If you experience suicidal thoughts, thoughts of harming your baby, or severe symptoms, please contact emergency services, go to the nearest emergency department, or call 988 / crisis line immediately.

National Suicide &
Crisis Lifeline

Call or Text

988

Chat: <https://988lifeline.org/chat>

National Maternal Mental
Health Hotline

Call or Text

1-833-TLCMAMA

(1-833-852-6262)

Postpartum Support
International (PSI)

www.postpartum.net

1-800-4PPD (4773)

How Loved Ones Can Support Maternal Mental Health

Maternal mental health is not solely an individual responsibility. Partners, family members, and friends play a critical role in prevention and recovery. Support is not about having perfect words. It is about presence.

What Helpful Support Looks Like

- Listening without fixing
- Offering practical help
- Checking in consistently
- Validating emotions
- Respecting boundaries
- Encouraging professional support when needed

Signs Someone May Be Struggling

- Withdrawal
- Persistent irritability
- Tearfulness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Expressions of hopelessness
- Increased substance use

Early conversation matters.

When to Act

If someone expresses:

- Thoughts of self-harm
- Severe confusion
- Unsafe behaviors

Immediate professional help is necessary.

What Not to Say

- "At least the baby is healthy."
- "This is just part of motherhood."
- "You should be grateful."
- "Other parents manage."

These statements may unintentionally minimize distress.

How to Start the Conversation

Try:

- "How are you really doing?"
- "I've noticed you seem overwhelmed."
- "What would feel most helpful right now?"

Listen more than you speak.

Shared Responsibility

Maternal mental health improves when communities show up consistently. Small actions — meals, childcare, emotional presence — reduce risk significantly. Support is prevention. Strong social support is one of the most protective factors against postpartum depression and anxiety.



Local Roots: Community Spotlight

NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI envisions a world where those living with mental illness can lead healthy, fulfilling lives supported by a community that cares.

To support that mission, NAMI provides advocacy, education, support, and public awareness around mental health issues. Programs are geared toward individuals, caregivers, and community members in a variety of settings. NAMI's Metropolitan Baltimore affiliate serves Carroll County. For more information about NAMI Carroll County, visit <https://namicc.md.org>.



A Mindful Moment: As you color, notice your breath. Let this be a few quiet moments just for you. There's no rush - this is your time to pause & be present.

Blooming TOGETHER

Nourish yourself.
Trust the process.
You are doing
better than
you think.

One breath. One step. One day at a time. ♥

