



## Postpartum Depression

### Background:

Postpartum depression is the onset of depression within the first three months or up to one year after childbirth. A woman who is suffering from postpartum depression may be limited in her ability to care for her newborn and handle her daily life. In rare cases, a severe form of postpartum depression called postpartum psychosis may develop within the first two weeks after delivery. It is associated with thoughts of suicide or harming the baby. Luckily, most cases of postpartum depression can be effectively treated when detected early.

### Symptoms:

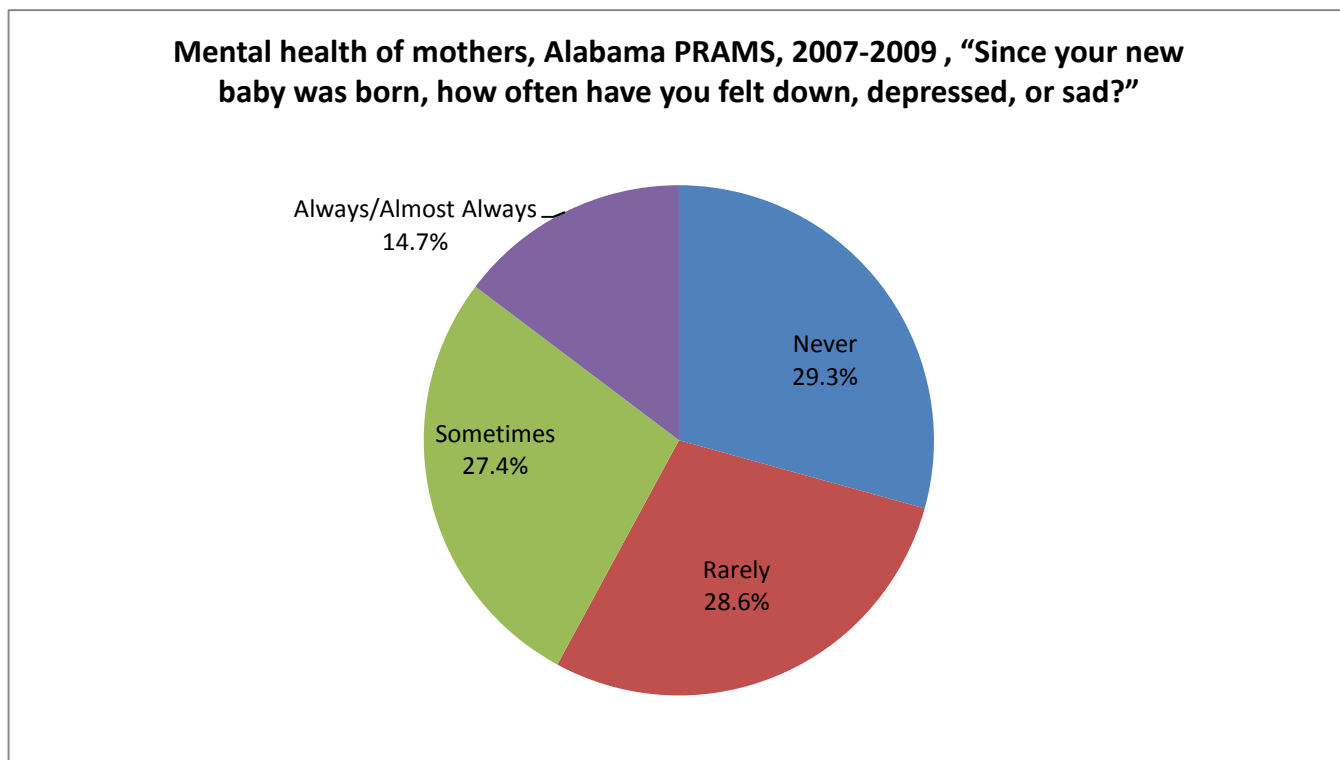
- feelings of sadness or emptiness
- numbness
- crying spells
- social withdrawal
- changes in sleep patterns
- changes in eating habits
- feelings of inadequacy
- intense concern or apathy towards the baby
- thoughts of suicide or harming the baby

### Risk Factors:

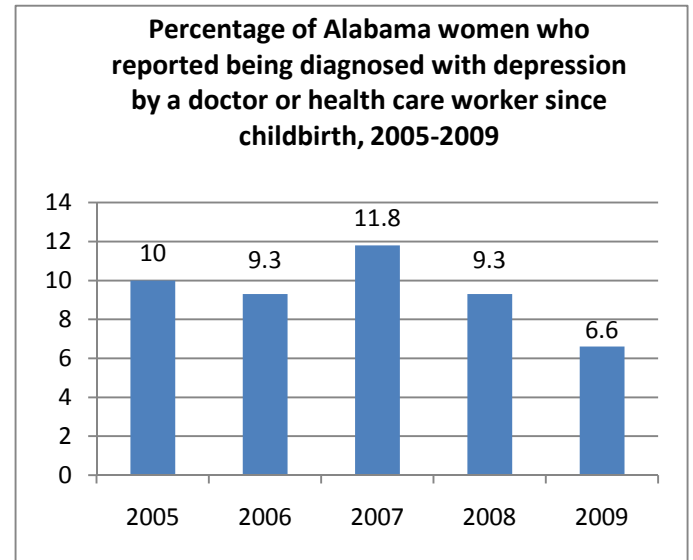
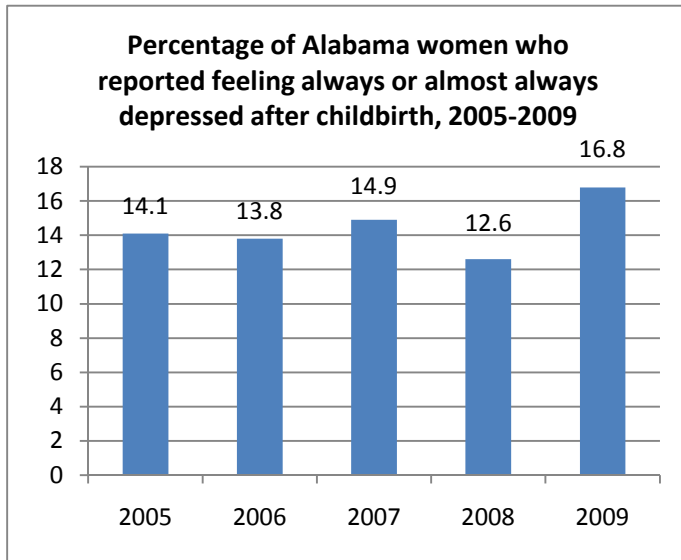
- history of major depression
- family history of mental illness
- recent stressful life events
- lack of support from family/friends
- isolation
- medical complications for mother or baby

### Status of Alabama Mothers (how common is it):

During the three year period 2007-2009, 14.7 percent of Alabama mothers reported being always or almost always depressed since the birth of their baby, and 9.3 percent of Alabama mothers reported being diagnosed with depression by a doctor or healthcare provider.



## Trends over five year period:



From 2008-2009, there was an increase in women reporting that they felt depressed always or almost always; however, the percentage of women who were actually diagnosed with depression decreased. This discrepancy suggests that health care providers may need additional training on depression screening and women need to be encouraged to communicate more openly with their health care providers.

### Alabama Mothers' Comments on Postpartum Depression:

"I am more depressed, sad all the time, and I feel so so so tired, no energy, no strength. Women should be seen and treated for postpartum depression."

"Mothers that spend the whole nine months without support and everyday comfort from their partner or spouse will be more depressed and very unhappy during and after the pregnancy."

"After my new baby was born, I was excited, but also in denial that I was experiencing postpartum baby blues/depression. My doctor realized it immediately on visiting me the second day, as did my husband, mother and close relatives. I now realize that this is something normal to experience and am taking medication."

### Resources:

#### Postpartum Support International

[www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)

#### The Online Postpartum Depression Support Group

<http://www.ppdsupportpage.com/>

#### March of Dimes

[http://www.marchofdimes.com/postpartum\\_depression.html](http://www.marchofdimes.com/postpartum_depression.html)

#### Jenny's Light

<http://www.jennyslight.org/>

### References

1. National Alliance on Mental Illness. Depression and Pregnancy Fact Sheet. [http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Women\\_and\\_Depression&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=88888](http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Women_and_Depression&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=88888) Found May 7, 2011.
2. Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Fact Sheet Postpartum Depression. [http://www.anthem.com/provider/noapplication/f5/s2/t0/pw\\_ad085774.pdf](http://www.anthem.com/provider/noapplication/f5/s2/t0/pw_ad085774.pdf) Found May 7, 2011.
3. American Psychological Association. Postpartum Depression. <http://www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/depression/postpartum.aspx> Found May 7, 2011.