New Mom Mental Health Checklist
– Black/African Diaspora

Use this checklist to help your healthcare provider know how you have been feeling after having a baby. It can be a good way to let someone know whether you might need help or support.

Since the baby was born, I think I might have (Mom, check any that may apply):

- Postpartum depression (PPD)
- Postpartum anxiety or OCD
- Postpartum psychosis
- Postpartum PTSD (post-traumatic stress)
- Bipolar disorder or mania
- Not sure; I just know something isn’t right

Here are some of the recognized symptoms of maternal distress that I have been having (Mom, check any that apply):

- I can't sleep, even when my baby is sleeping.
- I don't feel like eating.
- I don't feel like I can be the mother I want to be.
- I am worried about my baby most of the time.
- I am angrier than I want to be.
- I don't feel like I like my baby.
- I am worried something bad could happen to me, my baby, or to people I love.
- I feel a lot of guilt and shame.
- I'm worried that I'm not a good mother.
- I feel overwhelmed with all of the things in my life.
- I can’t concentrate or stay focused on things.
- I feel like I’m losing it.
- I don't feel clearheaded.
- I feel very dizzy sometimes or like I could faint.
- I want to be alone all or most of the time.
- I don't like myself.
- I feel numb.
- I feel like the only way to make myself feel better is by using alcohol, prescription drugs or other substances.
- I feel tightness in my chest, or chest pains, or sometimes I feel like I can’t breathe.
- I’m having more stomachaches or stomach problems than usual.
- I’m having more headaches or back pain than usual.
- I’m sweating more than usual, or I have the frequent urge to urinate.
- I have had serious thoughts of hurting myself.
- I have had thoughts that I should (not that I might or what if, but that I should or need to) hurt my baby or someone else.
- I am worried that I see or hear things that other people don’t see or hear.
- I’m afraid to be alone with my baby.
- I’ve recently been diagnosed with hypertension or diabetes.

I have had these feelings for ____ weeks. My baby was born ______ weeks ago.

Mom, check any risk factors for maternal mental illness that apply to you:

- I have had depression, anxiety, or PPD before.
- I have a history of bipolar disorder or psychosis.
- My family has a history of mental illness.
- I have been verbally abused.
- I have been sexually abused.
- I have experienced physical violence.
- I have had a stressful event in the last year (for example: house move, job loss, divorce or relationship problems, or the death of a loved one)
- I’m a single mom.
- I don’t have much help or support at home from my partner or family members.
- I was treated for infertility.
- My baby has colic, reflux or other health problems.
- I cannot afford basic needs for my baby.
- Before this pregnancy I had a miscarriage or stillbirth.
- I am a teen mom.
- I have a history of diabetes, thyroid problems, or pre-menstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD).
- I had twins, or more than 2 babies.
- I’m away from my home country or culture.
- I feel numb, angry or confused about recent racial events.
- I or my baby had problems in pregnancy or childbirth (for example: baby in NICU, bed rest).

This checklist is not intended to diagnose any mental illness. It is a discussion tool for moms to use with healthcare providers. It was created by Postpartum Progress, a national nonprofit supporting moms with maternal mental illness. For more free tools and support for perinatal mood & anxiety disorders, visit postpartumprogress.org.
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