

# RECOGNIZING POSTPARTUM PTSD

**Postpartum PTSD** is a cluster of symptoms that can occur after a parent experiences birth trauma. For more information, see our [Recognizing Birth Trauma](#) resource.

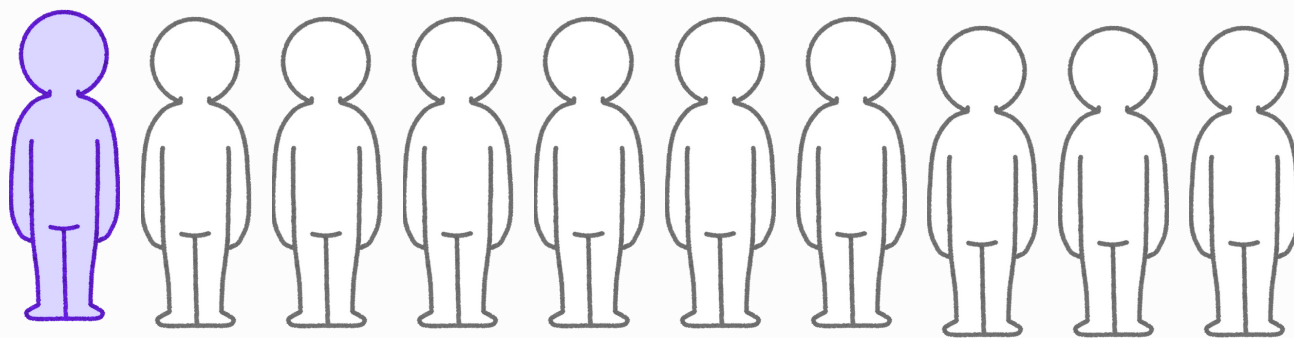
## SYMPTOMS CAN INCLUDE:

- Intrusive thoughts about the birth experience including flashbacks about the birth
- Being extremely alert or watchful (hypervigilance)
- Guilt over perceived “failure” about the birth outcome
- Difficulty bonding with baby
- Feeling irritable, jumpy, or quick to anger (hyperarousal)
- Avoidance of triggers that may remind them of the birth
- Persistent changes to mood following the birth

## 1 IN 10

Parents experience postpartum PTSD.

Parents requiring hospitalization following birth are more likely to experience postpartum PTSD.



## REMEMBER

- Even if the birth was normal from a medical standpoint, the parent may have experienced it in a traumatic way, which can lead them to develop postpartum PTSD.
- When assessing PTSD in NICU parents, it is important to consider the baby’s medical complexities, especially if they stemmed from the birth (i.e., born prematurely due to preeclampsia, emergency C-section due to deteriorating fetal condition).
- Postpartum PTSD can present in a delayed manner. Parents should be screened at regular intervals using measures, such as the Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS-5) or PTSD Checklist (PCL-5).
- Keep in mind, partners can also develop PTSD following a traumatic birth experience.

