

RECOGNIZING POSTPARTUM ANXIETY

Postpartum anxiety presents as a cluster of symptoms that can occur during the first year after a new baby arrives:

» Difficulty relaxing or focusing

» Excessive worries that are difficult to control

» Avoidance of certain activities, people, or places

» Irritability or feeling on edge

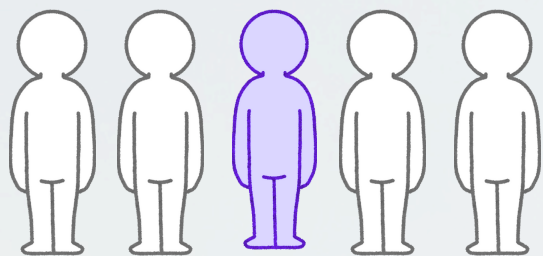
» Disrupted sleep (not due to infant care)

» Physical symptoms: racing heart, stomach aches, and jitteriness

1 IN 5

Parents experience postpartum anxiety

NICU parents are at increased risk.



- While less recognized, **postpartum anxiety** is more common than postpartum depression, and both can be experienced simultaneously.
- Both **birthing and non-birthing** parents can experience postpartum anxiety.

I haven't showered in days because I can't seem to leave the NICU. I'm so worried something bad will happen while I'm gone.

I'm so scared to leave my baby, even with someone I trust like my mom or partner.

I can't sleep at night because I am continuously checking to make sure my baby is breathing.

REMEMBER



It is common for new parents to experience some level of anxiety after welcoming a child. Postpartum anxiety becomes a concern when it significantly interferes with daily functions or the ability to care for oneself or the baby.



When assessing anxiety in NICU parents, it is important to consider the baby's medical complexities. Postpartum anxiety is only diagnosed if parent's worries are out of proportion to the baby's medical status.

For more information, see our [Providing Support for Postpartum Anxiety](#) resource.

