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# Pregnancy or Postpartum Obsessive Symptoms

## Perinatal Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms

Postpartum Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is the most misunderstood and misdiagnosed of the perinatal disorders. You do not have to be diagnosed with OCD to experience these common symptoms of perinatal anxiety. It is estimated that as many as 3-5% of new mothers and some new fathers will experience these symptoms. The repetitive, intrusive images and thoughts are very frightening and can feel like they come “out of the blue.” Research has shown that these images are anxious in nature, not delusional, and have very low risk of being acted upon. It is far more likely that the parent with this symptom takes steps to avoid triggers and avoid what they fear is potential harm to the baby.

## Symptoms

Symptoms of perinatal Obsessive-Compulsive symptoms can include:

- Obsessions, also called intrusive thoughts, which are persistent, repetitive thoughts or mental images related to the baby. These thoughts are very upsetting and not something the woman has ever experienced before.
- Compulsions, where the mom may do certain things over and

over again to reduce her fears and obsessions. This may include things like needing to clean constantly, check things many times, count or reorder things.

- A sense of horror about the obsessions
- Fear of being left alone with the infant
- Hypervigilance in protecting the infant
- Moms with postpartum OCD know that their thoughts are bizarre and are very unlikely to ever act on them.

## Risk Factors

Risk factors for postpartum OCD include a personal or family history of anxiety or OCD.

Postpartum OCD is temporary and treatable with professional help. If you feel you may be suffering from one of this illness, know that it is not your fault and you are not to blame. You can use our [resource page](#) to reach out now. We understand what you are going through and will connect you to people who understand and can help.



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