The Lifeline: Perinatal Edition

Penn State Perinatal TiPS Newsletter **Fall 2025**

Perinatal Telephonic Psychiatric Services - Perinatal TIPS

Penn State Health's Psychiatry and Behavioral Health Department offers remote guidance through the Perinatal Behavioral Health Consultation and Access Program (Perinatal TiPS) to providers who treat the perinatal population in Pennsylvania's Northeastern and Lehigh/ Capital regions.

Penn State Health Perinatal Telephonic Psychiatric Services

(Perinatal TiPS)

Perinatal TiPS is a program designed to expand access to real-time provider-to-provider phone consultation for both prescribing and non-prescribing healthcare professionals caring for pregnant and postpartum individuals. This includes a range of disciplines such as family and internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, midwifery, psychiatry, and others involved in management of mental health and substance use disorders.

The program supports perinatal behavioral health care by offering timely guidance for the identification and management of mental health and substance use concerns during the perinatal period.

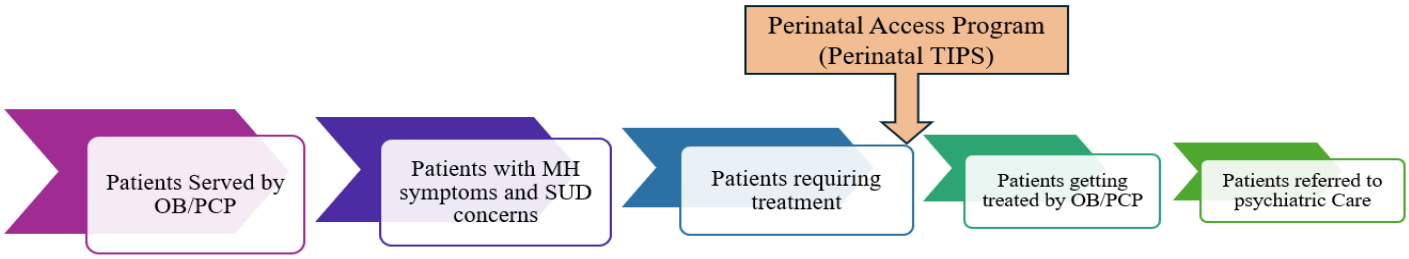
The Perinatal TiPS teams is comprised of psychiatrists, addiction medicine specialists, behavioral health therapists and care coordinators.

For more information, visit our website: **Pennstatehealth.org/PerinatalTiPS.**

Services provided through this program:

- **Telephonic consultation** - Our program offers provider-to-provider telephonic consultation from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. We also have an addiction medicine specialist with perinatal experience available for consultations focused on SUD or medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD). We offer both telemedicine and in-person consultations with a reproductive psychiatrist or addiction medicine expert.
- **Care coordination** - We help patients connect with providers in their local community for ongoing care and support.
- **Therapy -** We offer short-term or bridge therapy sessions to perinatal patients to assist with emotional well-being, coping strategies and supportive psychotherapy while they are connected to therapy services in the community.

Provider's Workflow



- **Educational Lectures** - We provide educational lectures to providers and professionals in the perinatal field. Potential topics include co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, postpartum depression, bipolar disorder in the perinatal period, perinatal ADHD, anxiety, insomnia and suicide risk assessment, and many more curated to needs of the providers.

Perinatal TIPS : Mental Health Webinar Series: Starting September 3rd!
This 6-session series focuses on mental health in pregnant and postpartum patients. It is designed for healthcare providers—both prescribers and non-prescribers—who work with perinatal populations.

Start Date: September 3, 2025 – meet every two weeks
5 half-hour sessions and 1 full-hour chat with experts
Noon – 12:30 p.m. – Expert Chat: Noon – 1 p.m.
Zoom – join from anywhere .

FREE registration!
Scan QR Code

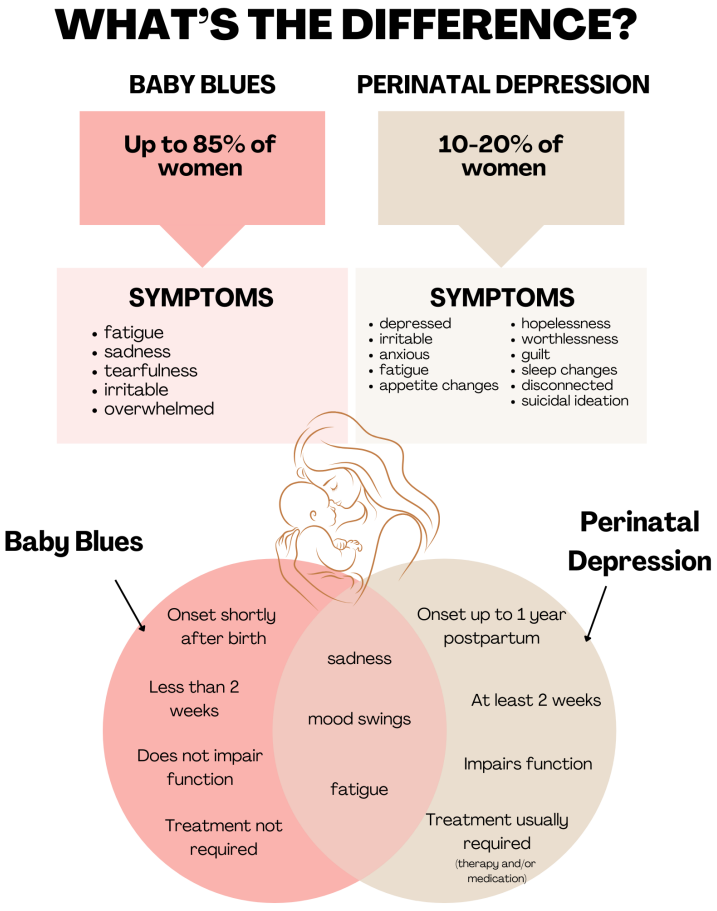
Perinatal Depression and Anxiety

Authored by Dr. Melissa Free

Many women will experience mood fluctuations postpartum in the setting of hormonal changes that resolve relatively quickly without intervention called the "baby blues." However, some may develop a more severe condition called perinatal depression. Here we identify key differences
between the two conditions.

What about perinatal anxiety?

Many with perinatal depression experience anxiety with two-thirds of those with perinatal depression also having an anxiety disorder.
It is important to identify anxiety symptoms that may be consistent with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) which can often include fears of contamination, compulsive checking, intrusive thoughts and images of injuring the baby which can lead to excessive avoidance of activities involved in caring for the child and cause extreme distress to the patient.



Risks of Untreated Depression and Anxiety

- Premature birth and low birth weight
- Impaired neurodevelopment and increased risk for psychiatric disorders
- Problems with maternal bonding and insecure attachment for children
- Increased risk for suicide
- Increased risk for substance use

Treatment Options for Perinatal Depression and Anxiety

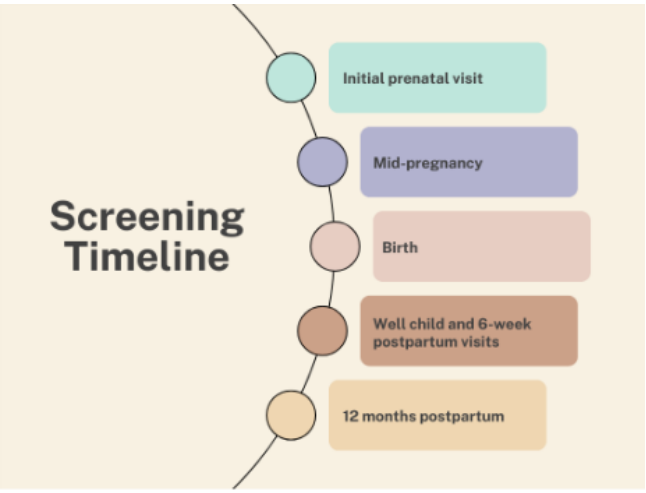
Psychotherapy is the first-line treatment for depression and anxiety when mild. For those with moderate to severe depression or anxiety a combination of psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy may be considered. Many antidepressants can be continued in pregnancy and during breastfeeding with proper risk vs risk discussion between the patient and provider regarding risks of medication use vs untreated mental health during pregnancy considering well-being of both mother and baby.

Helpful resources for information on psychiatric medications during pregnancy and breastfeeding:

- MotherToBaby - Organization of Teratology Information Specialists
- Massachusetts General Hospital, Center for Women's Mental Health
- Drugs and Lactation Database - National Institutes of Health

When and How to screen?

Consider using the 10-item validated Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) during pregnancy and postpartum to screen for depression.
A score of 10 or greater or an affirming answer on question 10 (assessing for suicidal thoughts) is a positive screen and indicates need for further assessment.



Reference :

Jahan, N., Went, T. R., Sultan, W., Sapkota, A., Khurshid, H., Qureshi, I. A., & Alfonso, M. (2021). Untreated Depression During Pregnancy and Its Effect on Pregnancy Outcomes: A Systematic Review. *Cureus, 13 (8),e17251.https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.17251*

Voelker R. What Is Perinatal Depression? *JAMA. 2024;331(14):1254. doi:10.1001/jama.2024.0434*

Contact Us

Call us @ 800-233-4082 (Option #3)

Please visit our website:

https://www.pennstatehealth.org/perinatal-telephonic-psychiatric-services

Electronically request a call back by using our website—'contact us.'

Email PTiPS today to schedule Educational lectures!

Perinatal_TiPS@pennstatehealth.psu.edu

Some topics we had covered so far:

- **Management of Peripartum Depression**
- **Screening and Treatment of Bipolar Disorder**
- **Cannabis Use and Pregnancy**
- **Do's and Don'ts in Pregnancy and Postpartum**
- **Management of Insomnia in Pregnancy**
- **ADHD in Pregnancy and Postpartum**
- **Treatment of Comorbid Mental Health and SUD Conditions During Pregnancy**
- **Postpartum Psychosis**

Penn State Health Perinatal TiPS Team

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