



Screening for Maternal Mental Health Conditions

Effective July 1, 2019, a licensed health care practitioner who provides prenatal or postpartum care for a patient must offer to appropriately screen a mother for maternal mental health conditions.

Recommended Screening Tools

It is recommended that all obstetrician-gynecologists and other obstetric care providers complete a full assessment of mood and emotional well-being using a validated instrument during both the perinatal period (at regular intervals throughout pregnancy) and postnatal period (6 to 12 weeks after delivery). Commonly used screening tools include: PHQ-9, GAD-7, PC-PTSD, Patient Stress Questionnaire, Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), and the Postpartum Depression Screening Scale.

Consumer Center for Health Education & Advocacy

The Consumer Center for Health Education & Advocacy ("Consumer Center") helps consumers understand how to use physical and behavioral health services. Consumers that have problems accessing necessary care may contact Aetna Better Health of California's member service department or the County Behavioral Health Access line. If a plan member feels his/her needs are not being met, the Consumer Center will work with them to identify barriers and resolve problems. The Consumer Center for Health Education & Advocacy number is 1-877-734-3258.

Postpartum depression occurs in 10% to 20% of women who have recently given birth, but fewer than half of cases are recognized because they aren't appropriately screened.

The clinical presentation of postpartum depression is like that of other major depressive disorders, with symptoms of depressed mood, diminished pleasure, marked change in appetite and sleep, psychomotor agitation or retardation, fatigue, feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt, decreased concentration, and recurrent thoughts of death or suicide. The presence of maternal depressive symptoms at a critical time for infant and family has additional adverse effects, such as marital distress, problems with mother-infant interaction and attachment, and adverse behavioral and cognitive effects in the child. Although the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) specifies that the symptoms of postpartum depression must begin within 4 weeks after delivery, many experts believe that women remain at increased risk for depression for up to 1 year after delivery.

Postpartum depression screening improves recognition of the disorder, but improvement in clinical outcomes requires enhanced care that ensures adequate treatment and follow-up. Aetna Better Health of California's Care Member Services Department can assist with finding providers who can further assess and treat Postpartum Depression. They can be reached by calling **1-855-772-9076**. Aetna Better Health of California's members are welcome to call us without a referral. For your convenience the following are attached:

- Patient Information Sheet on postpartum depression
- Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)