

# The Association Between Postpartum Depression and Breastfeeding: Maternal Well-Being

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## Background

Postpartum depression (PPD) is one of the most common complications of pregnancy, yet PPD is both under recognized and under treated. One in seven women worldwide are at risk for this complication and find it difficult to adapt to their new routine once diagnosed (Mughal et al., 2022). Postpartum depression can also negatively affect the bonding between an infant and the mother (Roth et al., 2021). Current interventions to decrease postpartum depression include the use of breastfeeding as it can potentially increase positive feelings for the mother, while simultaneously promoting a bond between infant and mother (Fariás-Antúnez et al., 2020).

## PICOT Question

For mothers who have experienced depression previously (Population), does breastfeeding (Intervention) compared to mother’s who bottle feed (Comparison) decrease the incidence of postpartum depression (Outcome) within 6 months of giving birth (Timeframe)?

## Literature Search Criteria

- Databases:
- UH Library Databases.

•CINAHL

•PubMed

•NCBI

•EBSCO HOST

**Key terms:** Breastfeeding; Postpartum depression; Depression; Bottle feeding; Breast-milk; Formula; Infant-feeding; Edinburg postnatal depression scale; Depression screening; Mothers; New-mothers; Postpartum

- Article selection criteria:
- Peer-reviewed article or journal

•Published between 2017-2022

•Aligns with research question

•Includes population (New mothers who have a history of depression)

•Includes interventions related to breastfeeding

## Synthesis of Findings

- Among breastfeeding mothers, the prevalence of postpartum depression symptoms was decreased compared to mothers who never breastfed or stopped breastfeeding within the span of 12 months (Fariás-Antúnez et al., 2020; Mikšić et al., 2020).
- Mothers who have reported decreased postpartum depressive symptoms have been found to have an 47% increased level of bonding and maternal satisfaction from breastfeeding (Avilla et al., 2020; Roth et al., 2021).
- Breastfeeding has been found to improve maternal sleep patterns and increase the amount of sleep by an average of 40 to 45 minutes longer. Mothers who are less fatigued have shown a decrease in postpartum depressive symptoms (Mikšić et al., 2020).
- Lower levels of oxytocin, and an increase in anxiety and depression, were observed in women who stopped breastfeeding by 8 weeks postpartum (Lara-Cinisomo et al., 2017).
- The risk of postpartum depression is shown to decrease by 37% in mothers who breastfeed or do not terminate breastfeeding early on (Islam et al., 2020; Xia et al., 2022).



## Decision to Change Practice

- The evidence found suggests that a decrease in breastfeeding and duration directly correlates with an increase in postpartum depression symptoms.
- Providing education regarding the benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and newborn, can increase the prevalence of breastfeeding during the first year of the newborn’s life.
- Educational brochures and consultations with lactation specialists will provide mothers with essential information concerning benefits of breastfeeding and postpartum depression development.
- Nurses can evaluate maternal mental health postpartum using Edinburgh’s Postpartum Depression Scale (EPDS) which screens parents for symptoms of postpartum depression within the first year after birth and Beck’s Depression Inventory (BDI) which is a questionnaire that measures the severity of depression (Mikšić et al., 2020).

## Evaluation

- By the end of the 6-month postpartum implementation period, increased breastfeeding will decrease the incidence of postpartum depression by 5%.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of this intervention the Edinburgh’s Postpartum Depression Scale (EPDS) and Beck’s Depression Inventory (BDI) will be used (Mikšić et al., 2020).
- All postpartum mothers that have received the intervention will participate in face-to-face interviews before and after the 6-month period to gather accurate results.

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