

Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale ⁽¹⁾

EPDS Instructions

Postpartum depression is the most common complication of childbearing (2). The 10-question Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) is a valuable and efficient way of identifying patients at risk for “perinatal” depression. The EPDS is easy to administer and has proven to be an effective screening tool.

Mothers who score above 13 are likely to be suffering from a depressive illness of varying severity. The EPDS score should not override clinical judgement. A careful clinical assessment should be carried out to confirm the diagnosis. The scale indicates how the mother has felt during the previous week. In doubtful cases it may be useful to repeat the tool after two weeks. The scale will not detect mothers with anxiety neuroses, phobias or personality disorders.

Women with postpartum depression need not feel alone. They may find useful information on the National Women’s Health Information Office website at <https://www.womenshealth.gov/> and from group websites such as Postpartum Support International at <https://www.postpartum.net/>.

SCORING

Questions 1, 2 & 4 (without an *)

Are scored 0, 1, 2 or 3 with top box scored as a 0 and the bottom box scored as a 3.

Questions 3, 5-10 (marked with an *)

Are reverse scored, with the top box scored as a 3 and the bottom box scored as a 0.

Maximum score: 30

Possible depression: 10 or greater

Always look at item 10 (suicidal thoughts)

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Instructions for using the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale:

1. The mother is asked to check the response that comes closest to how she has been feeling in the previous 7 days.
2. All the items must be completed.
3. Care should be taken to avoid the possibility of the mother discussing her answers with others. (Answers come from the mother or pregnant woman.)
4. The mother should complete the scale herself, unless she has limited English or has difficulty with reading.

- (1) Source: Cox, J.L., Holden, J.M. and Sagovsky, R. 1987. Detection of postnatal depression: Development of the 10-item Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale. *British Journal of Psychiatry* 150:782-786
- (2) Source: K.L. Wisner, B.L. Parry, C.M. Piontek, Postpartum Depression *N Engl J Med* vol. 347, No 3, July 18, 2002, 194-199

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