



County of Santa Cruz



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

POST OFFICE BOX 962, 1080 Emeline Ave., SANTA CRUZ, CA 95061-0962

TELEPHONE: (831) 454-4000 FAX: (831) 454-4488 TDD: Call 711

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Corinne Hyland

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(831) 566-4370

MAY IS MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Santa Cruz County – Having a new baby is often considered the happiest time in a family’s life, but this is not always the case. According to the California Department of Public Health, maternal mental health conditions – primarily anxiety and depression – are the most common complications of pregnancy and childbirth, affecting 1 in 5 mothers, or 800,000 families each year in the United States. While birthing people in Santa Cruz County generally experience fewer prenatal and postpartum depression symptoms compared to the average rates in California, there are still disparities within our local community, especially among different racial and ethnic groups. Specifically, postpartum depression symptoms are more prevalent in our Latine community, with rates approximately 3% higher than those among individuals who identify as White, when compared to both local and state averages.

Throughout the month of May, in partnership with local stakeholders and the [Perinatal Mental Health Coalition of Santa Cruz County](#), the Children and Family Health Branch of Public Health will be raising awareness of mental health conditions that impact mothers and birthing persons. Please join us to raise awareness of mood and anxiety disorders that may occur during pregnancy and up to one year after birth. The path is not always linear, and timelines vary. Education and resources can help. Please follow and share the links below to raise awareness:

- **May 1st is World Maternal Mental Health Day**- [Get involved](#)
- **May 3rd is Postpartum Psychosis Awareness Day**- [Postpartum Psychosis Awareness Day](#)
- **May 5th-11th is The Blue Dot Project’s MMH Awareness Week**- [The Blue Dot Project](#)

Symptoms of mental health conditions that can impact mothers and birthing persons include those commonly associated with depression (feeling sad, hopeless, lonely, or numb) and anxiety (feeling overwhelmed, worried, or fearful).

“Fortunately, maternal mental health conditions are often temporary and treatable,” said Dr. Cal Gordon, Santa Cruz County Maternal Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Medical Director. “A combination of self-care, such as proper sleep, nutrition, light exercise, and time off from caring for the baby can help new mothers through.”

This Mother’s Day, please ask mothers and birthing persons how they are doing. Bring a meal, watch the children, or help with chores like the laundry or the dishes. Let them know that help and support are just a call or text away at the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline (1-833-TLC-MAMA). The federal government launched the [National Maternal Mental Health Hotline](#) on Mother’s Day in 2022. The Hotline provides free, confidential 24/7 voice and text support in English and Spanish for mothers and birthing persons.

Though rare, [postpartum psychosis](#) involves a break in reality (psychosis and/or delusions) with onset most often within the first couple weeks after birth. Postpartum psychosis occurs in approximately 1-2 per 1,000 deliveries. Postpartum psychosis is a temporary and treatable condition that requires immediate help from a trained professional. Mothers and birthing persons experiencing psychosis are urged to contact their medical provider. In case of an emergency, please call 9-1-1 or go to your nearest emergency room.

For more information on local resources to support mothers and birthing people in Santa Cruz County, please visit [Perinatal Mental Health Coalition of Santa Cruz County](#). Additional information, including the [2022 Birth Report](#), can be found at www.santacruzhealth.org.

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