

Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) for Postpartum Depression

The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) was developed in 1987 for screening postpartum women in outpatient, home visiting settings, or at the 6-8 week postpartum examination. It has been utilized among numerous populations, including US women and Spanish-speaking women in other countries. The scale has since been validated, and evidence from a number of research studies has confirmed the tool to be both reliable and sensitive in detecting depression.

The EPDS consists of 10 questions and can usually be completed in less than 5 minutes. Validation studies have utilized various threshold scores in determining which women were positive and in need of referral. Cut-off scores range from 9 to 13 points. A woman scoring 9 or more points or indicating any suicidal ideation – that is, she scores 1 or higher on question #10 – should be referred immediately for follow-up.

The EPDS score should not override clinical judgment. 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 2 weeks. The scale will not detect mothers with anxiety neuroses, phobias, or personality disorders.

SCORING

Questions 1, 2, and 4 (without an *) are scored 0, 1, 2, or 3, with the top box scored as a 0 and the bottom box scored as a 3.

Questions 3 and 5-10 (marked with an *) are reverse-scored, with the top box scored as a 3 and the bottom box scored as 0.

Maximum score: 30

Possible depression: 10 or higher

Always look at Question #10, which indicates suicidal thoughts

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The mother is asked to underline 1 of 4 possible responses that comes the closest to how she has been feeling the previous 7 days.
2. All 10 items must be completed.
3. Care should be taken to avoid the possibility of the mother discussing her answers with others.
4. The mother should complete the scale herself, unless she has limited English or has difficulty with reading.

Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) Form*

Name _____

Address: _____

Your Date of Birth _____

Baby's Date of Birth: _____

Phone: _____

SAMPLE QUESTION:

As you are pregnant or have recently had a baby, we would like to know how you are feeling.

Please check the answer that comes closest to how you have felt IN THE PAST 7 DAYS, not just how you feel today.

Here is an example, already completed.

I have felt happy:

Yes, all the time

Yes, most of the time

No, not very often

No, not at all

This would mean: "I have felt happy most of the time" during the past week.

Please complete the other questions in the same way.

In the past 7 days:

1. I have been able to laugh and see the funny side of things

As much as I always could

Not quite so much now

Definitely not so much now

Not at all

2. I have looked forward with enjoyment to things

As much as I ever did

Rather less than I used to

Definitely less than I used to

Hardly at all

*3. I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong

Yes, most of the time

Yes, some of the time

Not very often

No, never

4. I have been anxious or worried for no good reason

No, not at all

Hardly ever

Yes, sometimes

Yes, very often

*5. I have felt scared or panicky for no very good reason

Yes, quite a lot

Yes, sometimes

No, not much

No, not at all

*6. Things have been getting on top of me

Yes, most of the time I haven't been able to cope at all

Yes, sometimes I haven't been coping as well as usual

No, most of the time I have coped quite well

No, I have been coping as well as ever

*7. I have been so unhappy that I have had difficulty sleeping

Yes, most of the time

Yes, sometimes

Not very often

No, not at all

*8. I have felt sad or miserable

Yes, most of the time

Yes, quite often

Not very often

No, not at all

*9. I have been so unhappy that I have been crying

Yes, most of the time

Yes, quite often

Only occasionally

No, never

*10. The thought of harming myself has occurred to me

Yes, quite often

Sometimes

Hardly ever

Administered/Reviewed by _____

Date _____

*Source: Cox JL, Holden JM, Sagovsky R. Detection of postnatal depression: development of the 10-item Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale. *Br J Psychiatry*. 1987;150:782-786.

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