

Hormones and PMADs

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PSVa Mission

Help new and expectant mothers and their families overcome anxiety, depression, and other perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs).

PSVa Vision

Every childbearing woman in Virginia will receive information about perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs) and have access to help.

#24HourDonation Challenge



August 24-25

Mark your calendars for PSVa's 2nd annual online

The hormonal and physiologic changes during and just after pregnancy are unique in a woman's life. Upon conception, hormones ramp up and don't return to pre-pregnancy levels until a woman stops lactating.

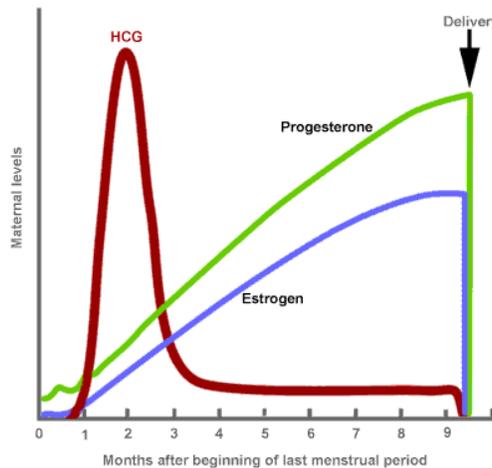
Different hormones have different purposes: some prepare a woman's body for pregnancy or labor or breastfeeding; others help the fetus grow and develop. Here's a quick overview:

During Pregnancy

Human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) tells a woman's body that conception has occurred and that the ovaries need to stop producing a mature egg every month. Over-the-counter pregnancy tests measure the hCG level in urine to confirm pregnancy.

Estrogen plays a key role in the development of certain organs in the baby and enhances the mother's uterus. *Amazingly, a woman will produce more estrogen during one pregnancy than throughout her entire life when not pregnant.*

Progesterone keeps the placenta functioning properly, relaxes the uterus so it can expand, and aids the mother's immune system.



donation challenge. We'll be raising funds, sharing information, and tagging friends on [Facebook](#)

Here's how you can help:

Share your story. In 100 words or less, tell us about your experience...how you got well...who was your lifeline. Send your story -- along with a photo -- to Annie Kelly at akelly@postpartumva.org. Feeling shy? No need to share your name or face.

Tag a friend. Let others know you support PSVa. Challenge someone to match your donation. Raise awareness.

Donate now. Want to beat the rush? Donate [HERE](#).

Shelane's  Run 5K

**Saturday, Oct 29 8:30 am
Fairfax County Govt Center**



Shelane Dawn Gaydos was a strong, energetic, intelligent, beautiful and warm woman -- wife to Brian and mother to Nadia, Sofia, and Olivia --

Hormone levels during pregnancy change drastically. The graph above shows how hormones fluctuate during pregnancy. Note how quickly hCG levels rise in the first weeks of pregnancy; experts theorize that hCG contributes to morning sickness in the first trimester.

Estrogen and progesterone increase throughout pregnancy, peaking just before delivery and plummeting back to pre-pregnancy levels in the first 72 hours after baby is born. Researchers think this drastic drop in hormones may contribute to postpartum depression.

These hormonal changes may also shed light on why some women (1 in 10) experience depression after a miscarriage, even if it is early in pregnancy.

Postpartum

Oxytocin has several important functions: during labor, it helps the uterus contract; after baby is born, it stimulates milk ejection.

Prolactin enables milk production and breastfeeding. Prolactin begins production in early pregnancy, peaks at delivery, and slowly settles to pre-pregnancy levels by about 4 months postpartum.

Every time a baby breastfeeds, there is a new burst of prolactin telling the mother's body to make milk and a corresponding burst of oxytocin telling the mother's body to release the milk into the baby's mouth. Many women report a pleasant mood when breastfeeding, but some women are bothered by these sudden changes in hormones, reporting temporary passing sadness or irritability when initiating breastfeeding. Learn more about this phenomenon [HERE](#).

How do hormones affect mood?

Researchers believe it is the FLUCTUATION in hormones that affect women, especially immediately after delivery. Some women are simply more susceptible to hormonal changes than others. Some women report feeling great during pregnancy; some women don't feel like themselves until they stop breastfeeding and hormones all return to pre-pregnancy levels. Some women love the emotions they feel when breastfeeding; others feel (temporarily) trapped and sad.

Researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health have been studying the effect of estrogen and progesterone on women's moods; learn more [HERE](#).

who tragically ended her life in June 2015 after a miscarriage.

Shelane's friends, family, and fellow Fairfax County police officers are hosting a 5K and Kids Fun Run to raise awareness about PMADs. Activities will include family-friendly games, booths, and more. Learn more [HERE](#).



Support PSVa during back-to-school shopping. Shop at [Amazon Smile](#) and select Postpartum Support Virginia as your charity of choice. PSVa will earn \$\$\$ for every purchase. *Thank you!*

According to Dr. Ruta Nonacs of the MassGeneral Center for Women's Mental Health, " While we know that estrogen levels modulate neurotransmitter systems involved in mood regulation, we do not precisely understand why some women are more vulnerable to hormonal changes than others."

The bottom line? It's complicated. Check out this [great article](#) by Kate Kripke, LCSW, for more thoughts.

Hope and help for new mothers



www.postpartumva.org

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