

EPDS Documentation Cheat Sheet

Reviewed by the BastionGPT Clinical Advisory Board · August 2026 · Reproduces no scale text, items, or scoring materials

The EPDS is a 10-item perinatal depression screen (0 to 30, past seven days; RCPsych copyright, not public domain). It screens, it never diagnoses, and thresholds are tradeoffs. Defensible charting names the version and threshold, records item 10 on its own line, closes the referral loop, and puts well-child caregiver screens in the infant's chart with the minimum necessary.

Instrument, version, and mode verify the form itself

Do: chart the full 10-item EPDS or name the variant (translation + language, EPDS-US, verbal, interpreter, private completion).

Pitfall: circulating copies with altered wording are documented in the literature; confirm the local form matches the original.

The timing anchor seven days, not two weeks

Do: record gestational age or weeks postpartum; at well-child visits, the infant's age and the respondent's relationship.

Pitfall: a bare score with no perinatal timepoint, or the recall window misdescribed as two weeks.

Total with threshold and purpose tradeoffs, not truths

Do: "12/30; clinic threshold 10 or greater; screen positive, assessment indicated." Pooled data: 10+ favors sensitivity, 11+ best balance, 13+ misses a third of cases.

Pitfall: "EPDS positive" with no number or threshold, or 13 charted as a diagnosis.

Item 10, separately, every time any nonzero: assess same day

Do: its own line, zero or nonzero; nonzero gets a direct same-day assessment whatever the total, documented separately.

Pitfall: a low total used to skip follow-up, "denies SI" unreconciled with a nonzero item, or means detail in the screening note.

Interpretation kept modest what the screen cannot say

Do: screen result only; in the largest cohort 22.6% of assessed positives had bipolar disorders, and the scale does not detect psychosis.

Pitfall: a negative EPDS charted as ruling out depression, bipolar disorder, psychosis, or risk.

Action and the closed loop quality logic counts 30 days

Do: same-visit assessment or referral, warm handoff received, connection verified, rescreen date, follow-up owner.

Pitfall: a positive screen that ends at a passive referral order.

Whose chart, billing, declined the well-child traps

Do: well-child caregiver screens in the infant's chart, minimum necessary, caregiver code under the infant; declined = offered + declined + re-offer plan.

Pitfall: maternal narrative in the infant chart, the caregiver and patient codes swapped, or a declined screen entered as a zero.

Before the note is signed

- ☐ Version, language, and mode named; form verified
- ☐ Timing anchor charted (pregnancy, postpartum, infant age)
- ☐ Total carries its threshold and the threshold's purpose
- ☐ Item 10 on its own line, even at zero
- ☐ Screen kept a screen; bipolar and psychosis not excluded
- ☐ Loop closed: handoff received, follow-up owner and date
- ☐ Right chart and code; declined charted as declined

Drafting with AI

Give it the facts: version and mode, timing, total with threshold, item-10 status, actions, referrals, chart placement.

"Draft EPDS documentation: full 10-item English, self-completed, 8 weeks postpartum, 12/30 at threshold 10, item 10 zero, warm handoff completed, rescreen at the 4-month visit."

Never paste patient-identifying information into consumer AI tools. BastionGPT is HIPAA-compliant with a signed BAA on every plan.

0 to 30

seven-day window

10 / 11 / 13

thresholds are tradeoffs

Item 10 rule

any nonzero: assess

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EPDS Documentation Template

Copy or print for your practice · Adapt fields to your organization's, payer's and jurisdiction's documentation requirements. Contains no scale text.

Setting: _____ Patient (initials): _____ Date: _____ Clinician: _____

Instrument + version + language: _____ Timing (GA / weeks postpartum / infant age + respondent): _____

Mode and conditions

Self-completed privately / verbal / interpreter · form verified against the original

Result

Total ___/30 · threshold applied and its purpose (local program or guideline)

Item 10

Zero or nonzero on its own line · nonzero: same-day assessment, documented separately, no means detail

Interpretation

Screen result only · not a diagnosis · bipolar and psychosis not excluded

Action and closed loop

Assessment / referral · warm handoff received · connection verified · rescreen date and owner

Chart placement and billing

Well-child: infant chart, minimum necessary · caregiver code vs patient code per payer

Declined screen

Offered and declined · reason if volunteered · resources given · re-offer plan · never a zero

Clinician (name and credentials): _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____