

Navigating the postpartum stage



IT STARTS
WITH
MOM

Your health is affected by things other than your personal choices. Where you live and not having access to good quality healthcare are just some examples. If you've just given birth this can be overwhelming. You can equip yourself with information that will help you advocate to get the care you need—because all moms and babies deserve the best possible start. Take a look at the recommendations below.

There are many postpartum mental health conditions

- **Baby blues.** Lots of factors can cause baby blues, including hormone changes that happen after birth. Symptoms of baby blues can appear 2 to 3 days after birth and include restlessness and bouts of crying. Feeling “blue” does not mean you did anything wrong.
- **Postpartum depression.** About 1 in 7 women is affected by postpartum depression (PPD), which can bring strong feelings of sadness, worry, and tiredness that last for a long time after giving birth. PPD needs treatment to get better. Talk to your provider about how you're feeling so you can get treatment early on.
- **Other mood and anxiety disorders.** Anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) are mental health conditions that can happen after giving birth. These can make it hard for you to take care of yourself and your baby, but you don't have to suffer in silence. Tell your provider if you're experiencing any of these conditions.



Health problems can happen after giving birth

- **More than just postpartum discomforts.** Fever, serious pain, discharge or redness that doesn't go away, and swelling should never be ignored and can be signs of serious complications.
- **Recognize warning signs.** Seek medical care right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms: bleeding that can't be controlled, chest pain, trouble breathing, signs of shock such as chills, clammy skin, dizziness, fainting or a racing heart, or seeing spots.
- **Don't skip your postpartum checkups.** Go to all of your postpartum checkups, even if you're feeling fine. New moms are at risk of serious and sometimes life-threatening health complications in the days and weeks after giving birth.



Care for yourself even after the postpartum stage

- **Pregnancy complications and long-term effects.** Conditions like gestational diabetes and gestational hypertension are pregnancy-specific conditions, but having them increases your chances of developing type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure later in life. Healthy eating, staying active, and getting to a healthy weight after pregnancy can help prevent these problems from happening, and possibly affecting your next pregnancy.
- **Prioritize overall wellness.** Even after your baby is born, your health—especially treatment for chronic conditions—is super important. Don't stop going to checkups because you're no longer pregnant. Keep up with all your providers on your healthcare team.
- **Ask for the support you need.** Taking care of a baby is a lot to think about. Ask friends and family for help. Tell them exactly what they can do for you, like going grocery shopping or making meals.



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