



WEEK 1: Postpartum Care

Welcome home! You did it! The next few weeks at home can be a busy time but make sure to take the time to take care of yourself.

Tips for After a Vaginal Birth

Vaginal bleeding can last for 2-6 weeks after birth. Bleeding is generally bright red for 2-5 days, pink/brownish for 5-10 days, then yellow/white for 1-2 weeks. Periods generally resume at 6-8 weeks if not breastfeeding.

If bleeding becomes heavy or you find large clots, call your health care provider!

If you have stitches, they may hurt and itch while healing. This is normal.

If your episiotomy or vaginal tear becomes extremely painful, red, or swollen, call your health care provider!

Practice good hygiene each time you go to the bathroom by using warm water with a spray bottle to clean the area and pat dry always from front to back (vagina to anus).

Ice packs may help with any swelling and provide comfort. To make an ice pack at home, wet some menstrual pads and put them in a zip top bag in the freezer.

Follow up with your health care provider when needed or at your 6-week check-up appointment.

Tips for After a Caesarean Section (C-section)

Major abdominal surgery requires 6 weeks to fully recover. Take pain medication on a regular basis.

If your C-section incision becomes extremely painful, red, swollen, if there is discharge from your incision, or if you have a fever (temperature above 38°C) call your health care provider!

Do **NOT** lift anything heavy or do any strenuous activity for 6 weeks or until your incision is fully healed. Support your abdomen during sudden movements (e.g., coughing, laughing) by holding a pillow firmly against your belly.

Stitches will dissolve in about 7 days. If you have staples, discuss with your health care provider when they will be removed (usually 2-7 days).

Vaginal bleeding can last for 4-6 weeks as above.

Follow up with your health care provider when needed or at your 6-week check-up appointment.

Emotions

It is normal for parents to feel tired, overwhelmed, and even tearful at times following the birth of a new baby. This is often called the “baby blues” and should last no longer than 2 weeks. ***If these feelings last more than 2 weeks, call your health care provider or go to your nearest emergency department without delay.***

If you ever have thoughts about harming yourself or your baby, go to your local emergency department right away.

Take care of yourself: Rest when you can, stay nourished with easy meals and snacks, and reach out to family or friends for support with housework, cooking, or running errands, etc.

You can use this [Postpartum Mood Survey](#) to help you assess your mood and learn about what you and your support people can do to help.

Have a Question and Can't Reach your Health Care Provider?

Dial 811 on your phone to connect with a Registered Nurse day or night for free, secure, and confidential health advice. [Health 811](#) also has a chat feature and is available 24 hours a day for breastfeeding support!

For more information about postpartum care, see [Your Guide to Postpartum](#)

**The first week at home is a time of transition. Take care of yourself!
Our next email will be about baby's first week!**

