

Your Postpartum Recovery

After giving birth, it's important to prioritize rest to allow your body to heal. Childbirth is a major physical event, and your body requires time to recover. Don't hesitate to ask for help from others so you can focus on healing. Be patient with yourself and remember that your body is adjusting to this major change!

Always follow your doctor/midwife's instructions about healing after birth, and be sure to contact them for any questions, issues, warning signs, or if you'd like to use any medications to help the healing process.

C-Section Healing Tips

- Until you're cleared by your doctor/midwife, avoid heavy lifting, limit bending, and try to avoid any movement or position that puts pressure on your incision.
- Keep your incision clean and dry, and follow your doctor/midwife's instructions about wound care.
- Reach out to your doctor/midwife if you notice signs of infection at the incision site, such as redness, swelling, or unusual discharge.

Pelvic Floor Recovery

Your pelvic floor is a group of muscles that support the bladder, uterus, and rectum. These muscles stretch significantly during pregnancy and birth, and it may cause some issues after birth such as: leaking urine, pressure in the vagina, or pain during sex. Talk to your doctor/midwife about gentle exercises that can help with your pelvic floor recovery. If you continue to have issues, consider asking for a referral to a pelvic floor physical therapist.

Bleeding After Birth

After birth, you'll experience bleeding called lochia that comes in 3 stages. It's heavy at first, but it gradually decreases, and lasts up to 6 weeks. Use pads rather than tampons for the bleeding, and change your pad every few hours or so. Contact your doctor/midwife if you soak through more than one pad per hour or if you have a blood clot the size of an egg or bigger.

Lochia Rubra - Lasts 3-4 days

Like a heavy menstrual period. May have small clots.

Lochia Serosa - Lasts 4-12 days

Moderate to a small amount. Thinner and less clots.

Lochia Alba - Lasts 10 days to 6 weeks

A small amount of creamy, whiteish discharge gradually disappears.



Vaginal Birth Healing Tips

- There are many different products that can reduce soreness and pain in your perineal/vaginal area, such as: ice packs or "padsicles," perineal cooling/numbing spray or foam, and medicated cooling pads.
- After or during urination, use a peri-bottle to gently clean yourself with warm water.
- Consider keeping a box or basket of all your postpartum supplies next to your toilet so they're all in easy reach.
- A sitz bath can help promote healing and reduce discomfort. It involves submerging your bottom into warm water using a shallow basin that fits into a toilet seat or filling up your bathtub with a few inches of warm water. If you have stitches, consult your doctor/midwife before using a sitz bath.
- You may be constipated or be afraid about having a bowel movement post-birth. Drinking plenty of water and eating fiber-rich foods like fruits and veggies can help prevent constipation. If necessary, a stool softener can also help.
- It's common to develop hemorrhoids post-birth. Most will disappear 1 month postpartum. Witch hazel, sitz baths and avoiding heavy lifting and constipation can help.
- A donut-shaped pillow or rolled-up towel shaped into a circle can help take the pressure off your perineum while sitting.

Resuming Your Cycle

- Menstruation typically resumes 4 to 8 weeks postpartum and can be (but is not always) delayed by breastfeeding.
- Your first few cycles may be heavier and longer than usual OR lighter and shorter than usual but will return to normal eventually.