

# After You Give Birth

The period after you give birth to your baby is known as the postpartum period or the time after childbirth. You must take care of your body and state of mind, as you may experience many changes after the birth of your baby. During this time, it is very important that you take care of yourself and pay attention to the physical postpartum warning signs so you can prevent any setbacks. These setbacks could be life-threatening, leading to maternal mortality or death.

So pay attention to any physical and emotional issues you are experiencing and talk to someone in your family or circle of friends, and reach out for support. Call your doctor or healthcare clinic if you are experiencing any of the following postpartum symptoms starting up to one year after giving birth.



## Physical

- ✓ Severe headache.
- ✓ Dizziness or fainting.
- ✓ Changes in your vision.
- ✓ Fever.
- ✓ Trouble breathing.
- ✓ Overwhelming tiredness.
- ✓ Chest pain.
- ✓ Severe belly pain.
- ✓ Severe nausea and throwing up.
- ✓ Severe swelling.
- ✓ Heavy bleeding – soaking through one or more pads in an hour.
- ✓ Changes in blood pressure.

## Mental & Emotional

- ✓ Feeling overpowering guilt, sadness, or panic.
- ✓ Being afraid of staying alone.
- ✓ Crying, anxiety, or worrying a lot.
- ✓ Feeling hopeless or like you are not good enough.
- ✓ No energy and finding it hard to concentrate or pay attention.
- ✓ Weight loss, weight gain, or appetite changes.
- ✓ Scary thoughts about hurting yourself or your baby.
- ✓ Finding it hard to do everyday chores.

Stressful events, relationship problems, lack of money, and financial insecurity can intensify symptoms of such depression and make it dangerous or life-threatening. When pregnant people care for themselves and have support systems in place, they can best care for themselves and their babies.

If you have any of the above symptoms after pregnancy, contact your health care provider and get help right away. If you can't reach your provider, go to the emergency room.



## Here is what you can say to start the conversation:

Thank you for seeing me. I am/was recently pregnant. The date of my delivery was \_\_\_\_\_, and I have serious concerns about how I have been feeling that I'd like to talk to you about.

I have been having \_\_\_\_\_ (symptoms) that feel like \_\_\_\_\_ (describe in detail) and have been lasting \_\_\_\_\_ (number of hours/days)

I have been taking \_\_\_\_\_ (medication) currently or have recently taken it.

- I know my body, and this doesn't feel normal.
- What could these symptoms mean?
- Is there a test I can have to rule out a serious problem?
- At what point should I consider going to the emergency room or calling 911?

## Credible Resources

### Postpartum | HCHF

<https://www.healthychoiceshealthyfutures.org/postpartum>

### Health Topics | MOD

<https://www.marchofdimes.org>

## For Help

- Crisis Text Line: text HOME to 741741
- One Chi Family: [chicago.gov/city/en/sites/onechifam/home.html](http://chicago.gov/city/en/sites/onechifam/home.html)
- Healthy Choices Healthy Futures: [healthychoiceshealthyfutures.org/postpartum](http://healthychoiceshealthyfutures.org/postpartum)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness: 800-950-NAMI (6264)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-TALK (8255)
- Postpartum Support International: 800-944-4PPD (4773)
- Maternal Mental Health Hotline: 1-833-943-5746
- Shades of Blue focused on Black Maternal health: [Shadesofblue.org](http://Shadesofblue.org)