

Postpartum Changes

Common experiences...

Items You Need Following Birth



Large pads



Mesh undies



OTC pain
relievers



Perineal numbing
spray



Nursing pads



Stool softener



Perineal squeeze
bottle



Nursing bra



Nipple cream



Witch hazel
pads

Frequent Urination and profuse sweating.

This is the body's way of ridding it's self of all the retained fluids from pregnancy and IV fluids..

After-pains

Uterine contractions while removing milk is helpful for involution bringing your uterus back to it's normal size.

Mammary Tissue

When breasts begin to fill with milk the breasts encourage with milk and may cause discomfort. If breastfeeding nursing frequently may help relieve some pressure and if baby has hard time latching on hand expressing milk may soften the areola for a better latch.

Stretch Marks

The stretching of your skin to accommodate growth of baby can make stretch marks and is largely genetic and may not be completely preventable. Stretch marks are normal and often fade and or become less noticeable over time.

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/related-conditions/>

Entering The Postpartum Period

After baby arrives the **postpartum recovery** time begins. Recovery from: episiotomy/tear, cesarean birth surgery, stretch marks, after-pains (cramping), painful mammary tissues, involution-uterus going back to normal size, lochia - postpartum bleeding occurs after both vaginal and surgical birth, diuresis -frequent urination. diaphoresis -profuse sweating, are all common experiences. Some changes resolve more quickly than others but all are common to childbirth.

1

INVOLUTION

Uterus returning to it's pre pregnancy size; may feel like cramping.

2

LOCHIA

Postpartum bleeding that occurs after both vaginal and surgical births

3

RECOVERY

Healing from labor and delivery includes episiotomy, tear or cesarean incision

Comfort measures for Postpartum changes

Involution begins as baby is born. It helps control bleeding. It may feel good to have a warm rice pack massage on your abdomen. If you have any questions or concerns please reach out to your care provider.

Lochia is the bleeding that occurs after birth. As your rest and recover the bleeding will change in color from dark red (around 4 days) to pinkish (around 10 days) to whitish yellow (around 14 days). Make sure you drink plenty of fluids. If bleeding increases to fill a pad in an hour or less and/or clots form that are larger than an egg/golf ball notify your doctor right away.

If you experience an episiotomy or tear be encouraged that this discomfort will only be temporary. Healing usually takes place in 10 days to 2 weeks. Clean perineum with warm or cold water (peri bottle or sitz bath), whichever feels best, at each bathroom visit. Use tux pads, stool softeners, perineal numbing spray, or pain medication as your care providers prescribe. Soft ice pack may bring comfort as well. Experiment to find a comfortable position for sitting, nursing and expressing milk remembering to drink plenty of

fluids. After Cesarean sections it will take approximately 6 weeks to recover. Your doctor will give you instructions for to care for the incision, watching for symptoms of infection and give you limitations for activities and directions for pain medications. The Lochia care will be the same as instructions previously mentioned. You may need assistance with positioning your body for resting, feeding baby and using the bathroom.

To comfort painful mammary tissues you can use cold or warm compresses. Also hand expressing can relieve some discomfort but don't completely empty your breasts. This experience is temporary. Please reach out to a Board Certified Lactation Consultant if the situation persists or causes difficulty for baby to latch.



BABY BLUES VS. POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

"The birth of a baby can start a variety of powerful emotions ranging from excitement and joy to fear and anxiety. But it can also result in something you might not expect - depression. 80% of moms experience postpartum "baby blues" after childbirth with symptoms like: mood swings, anxiety, sadness, irritability, feeling overwhelmed, crying, reduced concentration, appetite problems and trouble sleeping. Baby blues usually begin within the first 2-3 days after delivery and may last up to 2 weeks. Postpartum depression may be mistaken for baby blues at first but the symptoms are more intense and last longer. This may eventually interfere with your ability to care for yourself and your baby as well as handle "daily tasks". If you feel the "baby blues" don't resolve within the 2 week time frame please seek help. If symptoms worsen within the 2 week time frame reach out to your care provider as soon as possible or **Call/ Text 1-833-TLC-MAMA any time to talk with a trained counselor. ([MCHB.HRSA.gov](https://www.mchb.hrsa.gov))**

