You Know Your Body: You are the Expert of You

Before pregnancy, you knew your body. You knew your normal energy, appetite, sleep, emotions, aches, and rhythms. You knew when something felt different, even if you couldn't explain exactly why.

Pregnancy and postpartum changes don't take that knowledge away. You continue to recognize what is normal for you, what has changed, and when something doesn't feel right. Healthcare professionals bring education, training, testing, and clinical expertise to your care, while you bring a lifetime of experience with your own body. Your lived experience is your expertise. You don't have to look sick, know why something is happening, diagnose yourself, use medical terminology, or prove to them that something is wrong. Your observations are important information.

You are the expert on your experience, and your healthcare team brings expertise about health, pregnancy, birth, and medical care. These forms of knowledge can work together.

Your job isn't to diagnose yourself. It is to communicate what you are experiencing so your healthcare team can listen, evaluate, explain, and help determine what comes next. Sometimes a change will be a normal part of pregnancy or postpartum recovery, and sometimes it may need further evaluation. You don't have to know which one it is before speaking up. If something feels different or concerning, it is okay to say,
"This is different for me and I need you to look into this. What tests can be done?"

Village Tip: Before baby arrives, learn the Maternal and Infant Warning Signs together. Preparation helps everyone recognize, ask questions & respond more confidently if concerns arise.

Sis, Your instincts matter. If something doesn't feel right, don't ignore it. Ask questions. Your Lived Expertise and Their Medical Expertise Can Work Together.