



POSTPARTUM CHECKLIST

Taking care of your baby is important - but taking care of yourself is just as important. Heart-related problems can happen in the day, weeks, months - even up to a year - after delivery. Watch for changes and seek care immediately if you have any troubling symptoms. Here are some questions you can take to your next appointment with your health care professional.



CARE AFTER DELIVERY

Be sure to schedule postpartum appointments and continue your care after initial postpartum visits.

- Do I still have any health problems, such as gestational diabetes, hypertension or preeclampsia? If so, how can I best monitor them? Should I see a specialist?
- During my pregnancy, I had (high blood pressure/gestational diabetes). How does this affect my future health? Should I follow up with other specialists?
- Are there worrisome signs I should look for after giving birth?
- I had a c-section – what care should I be doing after surgery?
- What do I need to know about postpartum birth control?
- What else should I do to stay healthy?



BLOOD PRESSURE

After pregnancy, your blood pressure can change. Ask your health care team what healthy numbers look like for you and how often to check at home.

- If you had high blood pressure during pregnancy, plan a blood pressure check in the first week after you go home (within 3-10 days).
- Should I check my blood pressure at home?
- What is a healthy reading for me?
- What does a high reading mean? How can I lower it?



SYMPTOM AWARENESS

Call your health care professional if you have any of the following:

- Severe or worsening headache
- High blood pressure
- Blurred vision or other vision changes
- Feeling dizzy, faint or disoriented
- A fever over 100.4 F
- Extreme weakness or fatigue
- Vaginal bleeding or foul discharge
- Abdominal pain
- Chest pain or racing heart
- Rapid or labored breathing
- Severe nausea or vomiting
- Unusual swelling of hands or face
- Redness, pain or swelling in arms or legs
- Severe anxiety or depression
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your child
- General ill feeling

These symptoms could be further signs of postpartum preeclampsia, postpartum cardiomyopathy, postpartum hemorrhage or postpartum endometritis.

- What do these symptoms mean?
- How long should I watch for these types of symptoms?
- Am I at risk for problems after giving birth?
- Can I do anything to lessen my risk?



WEIGHT

It's normal to gain weight during pregnancy, and your health care professional can tell you what your weight should be postpartum and how to get there in a healthy way.

- What should my goal weight be now?
- How do you recommend I get there?
- How long should it take?



EXERCISE

It can be difficult finding the time to prioritize yourself when you're caring for a new baby, but it's important to exercise regularly. If you're still healing or need to reestablish a physical activity routine, you can start small by taking walks with your baby. Your health care team can tell you what types of exercises are best for you.

- How much should I be moving?
- How can I get stronger?
- What types of workouts are best for me?



NUTRITION

Eating healthy is still important even after delivery. Proper nutrition will help your body recover and feel your best.

- Should I continue taking a daily prenatal or vitamin?
- Should my eating patterns change? Do I need to eat less now that I'm no longer pregnant?
- If I had (gestational diabetes/gestational hypertension/preeclampsia/eclampsia) while I was pregnant, should my diet change?



FEEDING YOUR BABY

The most important thing is that your baby is fed and growing — whether you breastfeed, pump, or use formula. If you breastfeed, your baby is getting what you eat, just like during pregnancy. The health care team for you or the baby can help answer questions and share helpful resources.

Breastfeeding or pumping can be good for you and baby health, as research shows it can lower your chances of getting heart disease or type 2 diabetes.

- How long should I breastfeed and/or pump?
- Will breastfeeding/pumping help me lose weight?
- If I'm breastfeeding/pumping, should I be eating more?
- If I'm having trouble breastfeeding/pumping, where can I find help?
- What should I know about starting or stopping breastfeeding/pumping?
- How should I take care of my breasts while breastfeeding?



SLEEP

It's hard for new moms to get enough sleep, but sleep can benefit your health in several ways: improve brain function; heals your body; strengthen the immune system; improve mood and energy; and lessen your risk of chronic disease.

- How can I get enough sleep when I'm up with the baby?
- Will naps help me get more sleep?



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Your body and feelings can change a lot during pregnancy and postpartum. Many moms feel sad or emotional after giving birth — this is called the “baby blues” and usually goes away in about two weeks. But sometimes, moms feel very sad, worried or scared for a longer time. If you're having prolonged or abnormal feelings of sadness, anxiety or other concerning behavior, talk to your health care team to get help. Share any concerns and be open about any past depression, anxiety or family history.

- Is it normal to feel tired, stressed or worried?
- How can I find time for myself?
- What should I do if I feel sad or anxious for a long time?

To learn more, visit [goredforwomen.org/pregnancy](https://www.goredforwomen.org/pregnancy)
and have a conversation with your health care professional.