

Postpartum Checklist

A postpartum checklist to guide recovery and care for you and your baby after birth.

Physical recovery

- Rest whenever the baby sleeps and limit visitors early on.
- Follow your provider's instructions for any stitches or incision care.
- Use provider-approved comfort measures for soreness and swelling.
- Keep up with pads and track bleeding as it gradually decreases.
- Stay hydrated and eat regular, nourishing meals.
- Ease back into movement only when your provider says it is safe.

Rest and self-care

- Sleep when you can, even short naps during the day.
- Accept help with cooking, cleaning and errands.
- Keep snacks and water within reach during feedings.
- Shower and dress in comfortable clothes when you are able.
- Set realistic expectations and lower the bar on chores.
- Take short breaks outdoors or by an open window when possible.

Mental and mood health

- Talk openly with your partner or a trusted person about how you feel.
- Know that baby blues are common in the first one to two weeks.
- Watch for lasting sadness, anxiety, anger or feeling disconnected.
- Tell your provider promptly if low mood persists or worsens.
Postpartum depression and anxiety are common and treatable; you are not alone.
- Connect with a new-parent group or supportive friends.
- If you have thoughts of harming yourself or your baby, get help immediately: call your provider, a crisis line, or emergency services right away.

Newborn basics

- Feed on cue and watch for steady wet and dirty diapers.
- Always place the baby on their back to sleep, alone, in a bare crib.
- Keep up with newborn checkups and weight checks.
- Care for the umbilical cord stump and keep it clean and dry.
- Learn safe holding, swaddling and soothing techniques.
- Call your pediatrician with any feeding, breathing or health concerns.

Support and logistics

- Make a simple schedule so helpers know how to pitch in.
- Stock easy meals, snacks and household basics.
- Keep important phone numbers and your provider's line handy.
- Arrange shared night duties or feedings with your partner if possible.
- Ask about lactation support if you are breastfeeding.
- Schedule and attend your postpartum checkup.

Warning signs to call the doctor

- Heavy bleeding that soaks a pad an hour or passing large clots.
- Fever, chills or foul-smelling discharge that may signal infection.
- Severe headache, vision changes or very high blood pressure.
- Chest pain, trouble breathing, or a red, hot, swollen leg.
- Severe pain, a reopening incision, or pain that is getting worse.
- Important: This is general information, not medical advice. Always follow your OB-GYN, midwife or pediatrician. For any emergency symptoms, or thoughts of self-harm, call emergency services or a crisis line right away.