



*What to expect as you heal*

# Postpartum Recovery Timeline

*Your body's incredible journey back to you - week by week*

Recovery isn't linear. This timeline shows typical milestones, but your experience may differ. Listen to your body, rest when needed, and remember: it took 9 months to grow a human. Give yourself grace.

## Week 1

Days 1-7

### ● Your Body

- Heavy bleeding (lochia) - like a heavy period
- Uterine cramping ("afterpains") during nursing
- Perineal soreness, swelling
- Breast engorgement days 3-5
- Night sweats as hormones shift

### ● What Helps

- Ice packs, padsicles, sitz baths
- Peri bottle after each bathroom visit
- Stool softeners (seriously, take them)
- Sleep when baby sleeps
- Accept ALL help offered

## Week 2-3

Days 8-21

### ● Your Body

- Bleeding lightens to pink/brown
- Stitches dissolving, itching common
- Baby blues may peak (days 3-14)
- Milk supply regulating
- Energy slowly improving

### ● What Helps

- Short walks if cleared by provider
- Witch hazel pads for hemorrhoids
- Nipple cream if breastfeeding
- Limit visitors, rest is priority
- Talk about your feelings

## Week 4-6

Days 22-42

### ● Your Body

- Bleeding may stop or become spotty
- Uterus nearly back to pre-pregnancy size
- Perineum mostly healed
- Hair loss may begin (normal!)
- 6-week checkup: cleared for activity

### ● What Helps

- Gentle pelvic floor exercises
- Continue nutrient-dense eating
- Discuss birth control options
- Screen for PPD at checkup
- Slowly resume light exercise

## Month 2-3

Weeks 6-12

### ● Your Body

- Core and pelvic floor still recovering
- First postpartum period may return
- Sleep deprivation accumulating
- Body shape still changing
- Hormones continue to shift

### ● What Helps

- Pelvic floor PT if issues persist
- Gradual return to exercise
- Ask for help with night feeds
- Body-neutral clothing that fits NOW
- Connect with other new parents

## C-Section Recovery Notes

### Week 1-2

Incision pain peaks. Don't lift anything heavier than baby. Use pillow to support when nursing/coughing.

### Week 3-4

Staples/stitches removed. Numbness around incision normal. Avoid stairs when possible.

### Week 6+

Internal healing continues for months. No driving until off pain meds. Full recovery: 6-8 weeks minimum.

## ! Warning Signs - Call Your Provider

! Fever over 100.4°F

! Heavy bleeding (soaking pad/hour)

! Foul-smelling discharge

! Severe headache or vision changes

! Chest pain or trouble breathing

! Calf pain or swelling (blood clot)

! Incision redness, oozing, opening

! Thoughts of harming self or baby

## Postpartum Appointments

3-5 days

Baby's first pediatrician visit  
Weight check, jaundice screening

2 weeks

Baby weight check  
Should regain birth weight

3 weeks

C-section incision check  
If applicable

6 weeks

Your postpartum checkup  
Physical exam, PPD screening, birth control

## Daily Recovery Musts

### Hydrate

64+ oz water, more if breastfeeding

### Nourish

Protein, iron, omega-3s at every meal

### Rest

Sleep when baby sleeps (yes, really)

### Move

Gentle walks, nothing strenuous

### Connect

Talk to someone daily

### Feel

All emotions are valid

