



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, pads/cicles, 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

