

Postpartum SOS:

Spot the Signs & Seek Help

During pregnancy, your body changes significantly to grow, nourish, and deliver your baby. The 12 weeks after your baby's birth is sometimes called the fourth trimester. This is a crucial adjustment period as your body continues to heal and recover from pregnancy and childbirth. While most women recover without any issues, it's important to be aware that complications can arise. If you experience complications after childbirth, acting fast can save your life!

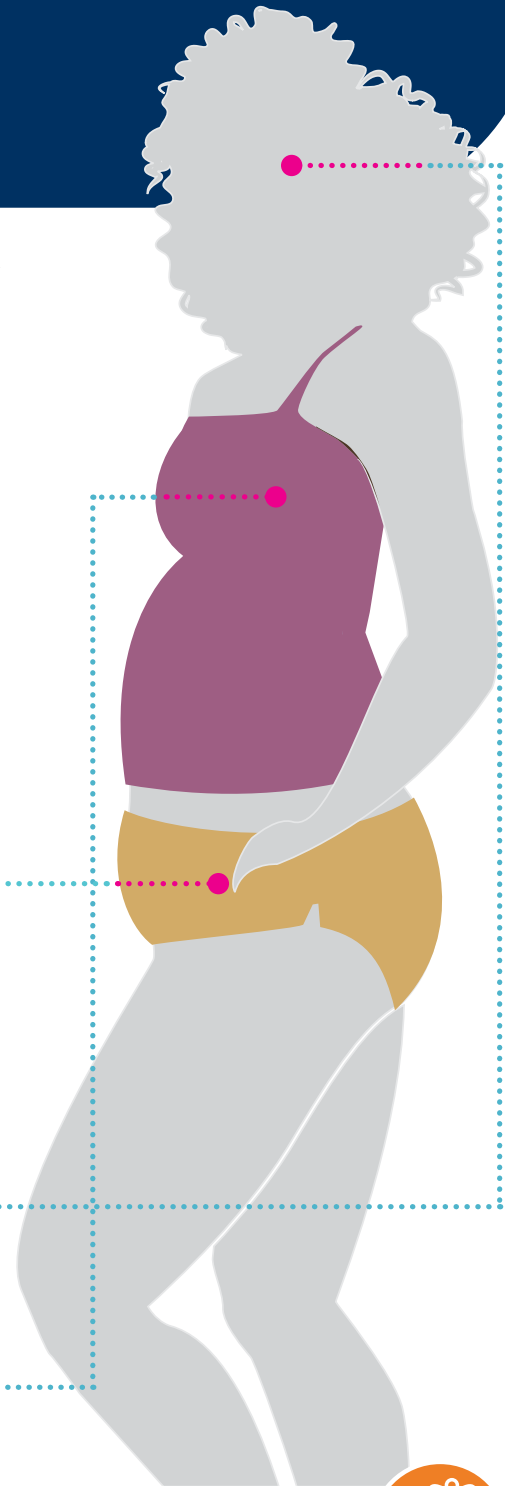
Did you know?



Just **ONE** symptom can signal a problem with your recovery. Learn to spot the signs, act quickly, and seek help right away!

Call your healthcare provider if you have:

- clots the size of an egg or larger
- bleeding that soaks through 1 pad per hour
- bleeding that increases or returns to bright red after having been lighter
- an incision that is not healing, including increased redness, swelling, pain, or pus at incision sites
- severe headaches that do not improve with over-the-counter medicine
- changes in vision
- a temperature over 100.4°F (38°C)
- severe tenderness, redness, or swelling in your legs or breasts



Call 911 if you experience:



- chest pain or a rapid heart rate
- shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- seizures
- thoughts of hurting yourself, your baby, or others

Remember:



If you experience any of these symptoms and cannot reach your healthcare provider, don't hesitate to go to the emergency room. Your life is worth it!

Why do these symptoms matter?

You may not think twice about feeling under the weather at most points in your life, however during the first few weeks after a childbirth, your body may be telling you something. Some warning signs can lead to life-threatening conditions if you don't seek treatment. Never diagnose yourself (even if you feel you know your body best). Always see a healthcare provider.

● **Chest pain and breathing difficulty**

This can be a symptom of a heart problem or a pulmonary embolism (PE). An embolism is a blood clot that moves from anywhere in your body into the lung. A PE is a life-threatening emergency.

● **Fever, pain, odor, incisions not healing**

All of these conditions can indicate the presence of an infection and should be reported to your healthcare provider right away. Infections can become serious when they are not identified and treated early.

● **Heavy or increased bleeding**

This can indicate a condition called postpartum hemorrhage and can be life-threatening. It occurs in about 3–5% of births, most commonly in the first 24 hours, but can occur up to 6-weeks postpartum.

● **Pain, redness, or swelling in the legs**

All of these conditions can indicate a blood clot.

● **Seizures**

Postpartum women diagnosed with preeclampsia (high blood pressure accompanied by high levels of protein in the urine or signs of other organ conditions) are at increased risk for seizures during the postpartum period. Preeclampsia with seizures is called eclampsia. Women who received treatment for high blood pressure during pregnancy should be monitored during the postpartum period.

● **Severe headaches or vision changes**

These conditions can also indicate high blood pressure or eclampsia.

● **Thoughts of hurting yourself, your baby, or others**

Postpartum Depression (PPD) affects 1 out of 7 women and can make caring for your baby and yourself difficult. Learn more about mental health conditions that can affect you or your partner at any time during your lives and what warning signs to look for.