Postpartum Healing & Recovery Guide

The postpartum period is a time of physical healing, emotional adjustment, and new responsibility. This guide helps you understand what recovery looks like, recognize when something is not right, and advocate for the care and support you deserve.

Why Postpartum Care Matters

Many pregnancy-related complications occur after delivery. Healing does not stop once the baby is born. Proper postpartum care can prevent serious health issues and support emotional well-being for the mother and family.

Physical Healing After Birth

Common physical changes include bleeding (lochia), uterine cramping, perineal soreness, incision healing, breast changes, and fatigue. While discomfort is common, severe pain, heavy bleeding, or worsening symptoms are not normal.

Call Your Provider Immediately If You Experience:

- Heavy bleeding soaking a pad in an hour
- Fever over 100.4°F
- Severe abdominal pain
- Signs of infection at incision sites
- Chest pain or shortness of breath
- Severe headache or vision changes

Emotional & Mental Health Recovery

Hormonal changes, sleep deprivation, and life adjustments can affect mood. Baby blues are common and usually resolve within two weeks. Persistent sadness,

anxiety, panic, or intrusive thoughts may indicate a postpartum mood or anxiety disorder.

When to Seek Mental Health Support

Seek help if emotional symptoms last longer than two weeks, interfere with daily functioning, or include thoughts of harm to yourself or others. Mental health support is part of postpartum care.

Advocating for Yourself

You have the right to continued care after birth. Use your voice:
• "I am not feeling like myself and need support."
• "I need a postpartum appointment sooner."
• "Please document my concerns in my chart."

Partner & Family Support

Partners and family members play a critical role by encouraging rest, attending follow-up visits, monitoring mood changes, and helping with daily tasks.

Alabama-Specific Note

In Alabama, postpartum coverage through Medicaid or Plan First may provide extended care. Contact your provider or local health department to understand available postpartum services.

You Are Not Alone

Healing takes time. Asking for help is a sign of strength. Your health matters, and support is available.