



WOMAN TO WOMAN DOULA CO.

# Postpartum Recovery

## And Resources Near You...

Because every new parent deserves a village

### Therapists & Mental Health Resources

Sliding-Scale or Low-Cost Options:

- Alliance Health - Sliding scale, accepts Medicaid. Crisis intervention, therapy referrals. 107 Sunnybrook Rd, Raleigh | [wakemed.org](http://wakemed.org)
- Wake County Behavioral Health Urgent Care (Monarch) Walk-in mental health & substance use crisis care.
- Anchor Perinatal Wellness - Perinatal-focused counseling & free screenings. [anchorperinatal.com](http://anchorperinatal.com)

### Postpartum Support Groups & Peer Community

- WakeMed Circle of Support for New Mothers: Free, peer-led, virtual or in-person groups for up to 24 months postpartum. **Contact: 919-350-8235.**
- New Beginnings Support Group: Weekly sessions focusing on mindfulness and peer connection.
- SAFEchild - Moms Supporting Moms: Support & education for postpartum families through baby's first year.
- Postpartum Support International - NC Chapter: Local listings, education, and tele-support options [postpartum.net](http://postpartum.net)

### Lactation & Feeding Support

- Breastfeed NC: Directory of lactation consultants, support groups, and inclusive services.
- Triangle Mothercare: In-home lactation consults.
- East Raleigh Doula Collective: Lactation specialists.
- Babies and Beyond: Feeding consultations & newborn care.

Hey You!

Welcome

You're in the right place. The postpartum season is a time of healing, adjustment, and deep transformation—and you don't have to navigate it alone. This page is designed to offer gentle guidance, practical resources, and evidence-based information to support you as you recover, bond, and find your footing after birth.

Whether you're looking for emotional reassurance, physical recovery tips, newborn care education, or simply validation that what you're feeling is normal, you'll find support here. My role as your postpartum doula is to help you feel informed, nurtured, and confident as you move through this tender chapter.

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## Additional Resources for Families

- NC MATTERS Toolkit: Provider-focused perinatal mental health resources.
- Low-Cost Childcare: Wake County Smart Start, YMCA programs.
- Home Visiting Programs: Welcome Baby, Family Connects Durham.
- Nonprofits: Diaper Bank of NC, SAFEchild.

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## Therapists & Mental Health Resources

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## Crisis & Emergency Mental Health Support

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 988 (Call or Text)**

- Alliance Health - Sliding scale, urgent mental health support

- Wake County Behavioral Health Urgent Care (Monarch) - Walk-in, no appointment needed

# Your Postpartum Mood Matters

Whether you are a mother, partner, surrogate, or adoptive parent you may be affected by postpartum mood disorders! They are temporary, common, and treatable. A professional can help you recognize what is "normal", and what could be a sign of a postpartum mood disorder and create a support plan!

YOUR ABILITY AS A  
PARENT IS NOT  
RELATED TO  
WHETHER OR NOT  
YOU STRUGGLE  
WITH YOUR  
POSTPARTUM  
MOOD!

## What Are The Signs?

### Exhaustion



- Mood swings
- Irritability
- Sadness
- Trouble making decisions
- Changes in appetite
- Weepiness
- Feeling like you can't cope
- Extreme fatigue
- Inability to sleep

### Baby Blues



- Mood swings
- Irritability
- Sadness
- Trouble making decisions
- Changes in appetite
- Weepiness
- Feeling like you can't cope
- Extreme fatigue
- Inability to sleep

### Plan Ahead

- ✓ *Plan to have extra support for day-to-day tasks so you can focus on your baby and recovery!*
- ✓ *Set realistic expectations of yourself and of your newborn. You are both learning!*
- ✓ *Make a list of resources and professionals who can support you should you need extra support or are unsure of anything!*
- ✓ *Know that you are not alone! It's ok to ask for help.*

### Mood Disorders



- Mood swings Irritability
- Sadness Trouble making decisions Changes in appetite Weepiness
- Feeling like you can't cope
- Extreme fatigue Inability to sleep
- 
- 

### ALONG WITH...

- Hopelessness
- apathy/inertia
- lack of joy
- racing thoughts
- panic attacks
- extreme crying
- Don't want to be alone with baby
- Visions or extreme fear of harm coming to baby
- Obsessive thoughts or actions

If you are experiencing mood swings, irritability, sadness, are having trouble making decisions, changes in your appetite, "weepiness", are feeling like you can't cope, extreme fatigue, or an inability to sleep **that doesn't improve after 2 weeks**, please reach out to someone you trust for help.

# Postpartum Recovery & The Fourth Trimester

Congratulations! Mission accomplished! Now that labour and birth are behind you it's time to rest, recover, and facilitate physical healing. Optimal recovery requires rest! Set boundaries, ask for help and consider hiring a Doula!

\*Cesarean recovery differs slightly! Ask your Doula for more info.

## Hours After Birth

- Your healthcare provider might use fundal massage to stimulate the uterus to contract. This helps keep the uterus firm and prevents heavy blood loss.
- You may experience afterpains - pain/discomfort as the uterus contracts. Afterpains increase with each birth and typically disappear 1 week postpartum.
- Ibuprofen is typically prescribed for afterpains. You can ask your healthcare provider about this before discharge.

## Weeks After Birth

- In the 6-weeks post-birth, the uterus returns to its pre-pregnancy size.

### Lochia Rubra - Lasts 3 to 4 Days.



Like a heavy menstrual period. May have small clots. Smells fleshy like menstrual blood.

### Lochia Serosa - Lasts 4 to 10 Days.



Moderate to a small amount. Overactivity and stress can increase/change from Serosa back to Rubra.

### Lochia Alba - Lasts 10 to 28 Days.



A small amount of creamy, whiteish discharge gradually disappears.

The total volume of postpartum "lochia" is typically between 200-500 ml and can last from 3-6 weeks.

## Resuming Your Cycle

- Menstruation typically resumes 4 to 8 weeks postpartum and can be (but is not always) delayed by breastfeeding.
- Your first few cycles may be heavier and longer than usual OR lighter and shorter than usual but will return to normal eventually.



## Postpartum Healing Recommendations

- Ice packs or "pad-sicles" can help reduce swelling.
- After or during urination, use a peri-bottle to clean yourself with warm water. Be sure to spray front to back to avoid infection from bacteria around the rectal area. Pat, don't wipe yourself dry also front to back.
- If you are struggling to relax in order to urinate, putting a drop or two of peppermint oil in the toilet before can stimulate the right muscles to relax making it easier.
- You may be constipated or have fear around having a bowel movement post-birth. A stool softener (NOT a laxative) can help.
- Drink lots of water and eat fresh and dried fruits/veggies to prevent constipation.
- It's common to develop hemorrhoids post-birth. Most will disappear 1 month postpartum. Witch hazel, sitz baths and avoiding heavy lifting and constipation can help!
- Do not use tampons before your postpartum follow-up with your healthcare provider. Do not use Douche products.
- Sitz baths can help reduce soreness. If you have had a cesarean, follow your provider's instructions regarding baths.
- A doughnut pillow or rolled-up towel shaped into a circle can help take the pressure off your perineum while sitting.
- Sitting on a firm surface may feel more comfortable if you have stitches.
- Lay down as much as possible in the first 6 weeks postpartum. When sitting and standing, gravity can increase swelling and cause pelvic floor ache/pain.
- Be sure to follow your healthcare practitioner's recovery instructions.

# Postpartum Healing & Recovery Warning Signs

Whether you birthed your baby without complications or needed interventions, birth can cause trauma and injuries that require treatment days, weeks, and sometimes months later. Keep your healthcare team informed of any pain, discomfort, or anything that "just doesn't feel right".

## At-Home Pain Management:



Ibuprofen or Acetaminophen for pain.  
Use a peri-bottle and proper after-toilet care  
Avoid Standing for long periods  
Witch Hazel and Sitz Baths for swelling/pain  
Keep incisions and stitches clean and dry



## Report Critical Information

How many days/weeks postpartum are you?

Do you take any medications regularly?

How has your bleeding been? Stress?

Are you taking any vitamins or supplements?

Birth Details (surgical? assisted? trauma?)

Did you have an epidural?

Are you breastfeeding? Is feeding going well?

When did you first notice symptoms?

***If you have any concerns or worries about your or your baby's health after birth, don't hesitate to call your trusted healthcare provider!***

Family Dr.: \_\_\_\_\_

OB/GYN or midwife: \_\_\_\_\_

Public Health Link: \_\_\_\_\_



## Contact Your Family Doctor

- Burning with urination
- A sore, red, hot, painful area on the breast/chest tissue with flu-like symptoms
- Foul-smelling vaginal discharge (like rotten fish)
- Vaginal itching or soreness
- Increased pain around episiotomy/stitches site (may be accompanied by pus-like discharge or blood)
- Rash or hives (itchy or not)

## When to Seek Medical Attention

- Blood in urine or inability to urinate
- Fever (oral or temporal temperature of 100.0 degrees F / 38 degrees C or higher)
- Cesarean Incision opening (may be accompanied by pus-like discharge or blood)
- Swollen, red, painful area on the leg (especially in your calf) that is hot/tender to the touch.
- Passing a blood clot larger than a lemon followed by heavy bleeding OR bleeding that soaks a pad within 1 hour or less.
- Severe headache that is worse when upright and less painful when lying down
- New sudden onset of pain such as abdominal tenderness.
- Burning near perineal stitches when urinating
- Pain/tenderness in front or back of your pelvis (may be accompanied by difficulty walking and/or a "grating" sensation in your pubic joint)