POSTPARTUM

Resource Guide

Disclaimer:
We try to be inclusive of all people in our materials. It is our goal to use gender inclusive language when possible. Please know that all references to breastfeeding are meant to be inclusive of all breastfeeding, chestfeeding, and human milk feeding individuals.



Caring for your newborn can be an exciting time in your life, but it can also have its challenges. Even if this is not your first child, every baby is different, so each postpartum experience is unique. Although caring for your newborn might feel like it is the most important thing, **taking care of yourself is just as important.**

Delivery

6 Months

This resource guide will cover important topics during your postpartum period, which is the time that takes place from delivery until about 6 months after.

Note: This resource guide will not cover breastfeeding. For more information about breastfeeding, please review our breastfeeding resource guides.



Postpartum Care

There are so many changes that happen after having a baby, both mentally and physically. Postpartum care is the health care you get after your pregnancy. Following up with a healthcare provider soon after delivery is important because those who are postpartum are at risk of serious and sometimes life-threatening mental and physical health complications.

A postpartum check-up is recommended between 3-12 weeks after delivery for those who delivered vaginally or 2-3 weeks for those who had a c-section. If you had a c-section, pregnancy complications, or you have a chronic medical issue, your provider may schedule you earlier or give you extra postpartum checkup appointments. For those who experienced high blood pressure or gestational diabetes during your pregnancy, you may have additional appointments to assess these medical concerns after delivery.

During your postpartum appointments, your healthcare provider should:

- Make sure you are healing well and your body is recovering
- Talk about your mood and how you are feeling
- Examine your body to make sure any changes you are having are normal
- Provide you with referrals to support groups, therapy, or other resources, if needed

Come prepared to your postpartum appointments with a list of questions or any concerns you may have, and do not be afraid to ask follow-up questions. To make sure you understand what your provider is saying, say it back in your own words what you think they are telling you to make sure that you are on the same page. Advocating, or speaking up for yourself, is very important when it comes to your health and well-being. If you ever feel like you are not getting the care you need, it is okay to get a second opinion or find a different healthcare provider.

According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), only about 60% of postpartum individuals attend a postpartum check-up appointment. It is important to attend these appointments, even if you are feeling fine. One of the **best ways to take care of your baby is by taking care of yourself.**

As always, if you have questions or experience physical or mental health concerns, contact your healthcare provider right away.

Support

Many parents find it hard to ask for help. Asking for help does not mean you are weak. It is a smart and brave choice. It takes a community to raise a child and reaching out for support can make this time a little easier and more enjoyable.

Asking for help or support looks different for everyone. Support can come from:



A partner that shares responsibilities



Family or friends who can help with tasks or provide emotional support



A healthcare provider when something does not seem right



In-person or online support groups

Programs like WIC

You might need one of these types of support or you might need all of them



Support



Also, the type of help you need might be different from the help someone else needs. The help you need might be physical like help with laundry, dishes, childcare, or meals. After having a baby, your body needs time to recover.



Help may also be emotional support like talking to someone. This might be needed especially in the early days of having a newborn, when it can feel more lonely. Taking care of a baby requires a lot of attention, and there will be times when it feels like everything is about the baby.



It is normal to have many different feelings after having a baby. You might feel happy, sad, anxious, moody, or a combination of several emotions, especially in the first two weeks after delivery. Some parents experience postpartum depression or anxiety, which can make it hard to bond with their baby or handle daily tasks. Asking for support can give you comfort and let you know that what you are feeling is okay.



Remember that feeling lonely when you have a new baby is normal. When a baby comes, you may have less time for your partner, friends, hobbies, and activities you used to enjoy. Your focus shifts to taking care of your baby, and this can make you feel disconnected from friends and the social life you were used to. Some people may not understand your new responsibilities or have different schedules. This can make it harder to keep in touch with friends and you may feel like you do not quite fit in anymore. You are not alone. As your baby grows and you learn new routines, you will begin to feel more like yourself or at least a new version of yourself.

Help!

Asking for help from your partner, family members, friends, professionals, or organizations can help you avoid feeling lonely, overwhelmed, or burnt out.

Social Comparison

Avoid comparing yourself to others during the postpartum period. This is important for your wellbeing. Every person's postpartum journey is different. Welcome your own path and understand that your body and emotions are not the same as other peoples. Do not expect your recovery to be the same as someone else's. Everyone's body and healing process is unique. Give yourself time and avoid rushing your progress.

Instead of comparing yourself to others, celebrate your own successes. Look for and appreciate small wins, like any amount of successful breastfeeding or finding time for self-care.

Here are some tips for avoiding comparison:



Be careful with social media
Social media can help you connect with others, but it can also encourage you to compare yourself to others and feel that you are not "enough". Social media tends to show everyone at their best. Try spending less time on social media or unfollowing accounts that do not uplift you if you find yourself feeling this way



Find your team
Build a team of family, friends, other caregivers, or organizations who understand and support you. Have people around you who lift you up and boost your confidence



Practice self-care
Self-care means doing something to take care of yourself physically, mentally, or emotionally. It is very important during this time. Make sure to rest when you can, eat regularly, find fun ways to move your body (with guidance from your healthcare provider), and do activities that make you happy



Find the good
Focus on the positive parts of your postpartum experience. Being grateful for milestones, support, and moments of joy can help you focus on what is going well

Remember this is a big life change and it is okay to have ups and downs. It is always important to treat yourself with kindness and understanding. Be patient and celebrate your own progress. If you keep comparing yourself to others or feel bad about yourself, reach out to a mental health professional or join a support group for caregivers. They can offer guidance and strategies to help you with your feelings.



Nutrition

Your nutrition after having a baby is important because your body goes through big changes during pregnancy and childbirth. Taking care of yourself by eating a variety of foods helps your body recover and become strong again. Giving your body the nutrition it needs is one of the best things you can do for yourself.

Here are some reasons why:

Healing
Your body needs extra nutrients to heal properly after giving birth. Eating a variety of foods provides your body with the building blocks it needs to repair tissues and recover from the strain or stress

Energy
Taking care of a new baby can be tiring. Eating throughout the day gives you the energy you need to take care of yourself and your baby. It helps you feel less tired and more ready to handle daily tasks

Mood and Emotions
Good nutrition can have a positive impact on your mood and emotions. Certain nutrients, like omega-3 fatty acids, are linked to better mental health. These are important during a time when your hormone levels are changing

Preventing Health Issues
Eating a balanced diet can help prevent health problems like anemia (low iron), constipation, and other issues common after childbirth

Bone Health
Your body may lose some calcium during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Eating foods rich in calcium and other bone-healthy nutrients, like vitamin D, helps keep your bones strong

Immune System
Eating a variety of foods supports your immune system, which is important while your body recovers and because you are exposed to new things like illnesses while taking care of your baby

Get the Most from Food Groups

Here are some tips for getting the most from your food groups:



Make at least half your plate fruits and vegetables
Choose a variety of colors, including dark green, red, and orange fruits and vegetables

Fun fact:
Beans and dried peas count as vegetables, too



Make at least half your grains whole grains
Instead of refined grains like white bread and white rice, choose whole grains such as whole grain bread, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, barley, corn or whole wheat tortillas, and oatmeal



Choose fat-free or 1% low-fat milk
Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy products such as milk, yogurt, cheese, Kefir or fortified soy beverages, and tofu



Vary your protein food choices
Choose seafood, lean meat and poultry, eggs, beans, dried peas, soy products, and nuts and seeds

Great News!

WIC offers foods from all five food groups!

Daily Food Group Recommendations

Below are the recommended amounts for each food group by daily calorie needs. Calorie needs are based on many things including height, weight, age, sex, activity level, and if you are pregnant or lactating. You can find out your specific needs by completing your own MyPlate Plan.

	Calories						
Food Group	**1800**	**2000**	**2200**	**2400**	**2600**	**2800**	What counts as 1 cup or 1 ounce?
Vegetables (cups/day)	2.5	2.5	3	3	3.5	3.5	1 cup raw or cooked vegetables 2 cups raw leafy vegetables
Fruit (cups/day)	1.5	2	2	2	2	2.5	1 cup fruit or 100% juice ½ cup dried fruit
Grains (ounces/day)	6	6	7	8	9	10	1 slice bread 1 ounce ready-to-eat cereal ½ cup cooked pasta, rice, or cereal
Dairy (cup/day)	3	3	3	3	3	3	1 cup milk 8 ounces yogurt 1½ ounces natural cheese 2 ounces processed cheese
Protein (ounces/day)	5	5.5	6	6.5	6.5	7	1 ounce lean meat, poultry, or seafood ¼ cup cooked beans ½ ounce nuts 1 egg 1 tablespoon peanut butter



Important Nutrients

Remember, eating well does not mean being perfect or following strict rules. It is about giving your body the kinds of foods to help it recover and you enjoy during this important time in your life. These are some important nutrients to include in your diet:



Calcium

After having a baby, the body needs calcium to stay healthy. Calcium is a mineral that builds and strengthens our bones and teeth. It is also important for muscles to work, nerves to send messages, and blood to clot properly. So, after having a baby, getting the right amount of calcium helps the body recover and makes sure everything in the body works well.

Food Sources **Milk, cheese, yogurt, dark green leafy vegetables, fortified soy milk, calcium-fortified orange juice**, and **calcium-set tofu, canned sardines and salmon (with bones)**



Folic Acid/Folate

You may have heard that it is important to get plenty of the vitamin folic acid/folate before and during pregnancy because it helps develop the baby's neural tube, which eventually becomes their brain and spinal cord. However, folic acid/folate is just as important after having a baby! Folate is found naturally in foods and folic acid is the synthetic form of folate added to supplements. It helps fix cells, make new DNA, and heal the body after childbirth. Folate/folic acid makes healthy red blood cells, which are needed for energy and to avoid feeling weak. It can also help with mood and prevent sad feelings.

Food Sources **Fortified breakfast cereal,** enriched bread and pasta**, dark green leafy vegetables, orange juice, beans (black-eyed peas, kidney), peas, asparagus, brussels sprouts, avocado, broccoli,** and peanuts



Iron

After having a baby, not having enough iron can cause health problems for both the postpartum person and the baby. Symptoms of low iron include feeling tired, having trouble thinking clearly, and even feeling sad. Iron helps replace the blood that was lost during delivery, supports healing and recovery, boosts energy levels, prevents weakness and tiredness, and helps the body as monthly periods or menstrual cycles get back to normal.

Food Sources Red meats, poultry, **seafood, beans (white, kidney, chickpea), peas, lentils, tofu, fortified breakfast cereals**, **leafy green vegetables, and potatoes**

WIC-provided foods are bolded

Important Nutrients



Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to improve mood and reduce the risk of perinatal depression. They are considered anti-inflammatories which can help during the postpartum period by reducing inflammation, supporting tissue repair, and easing pain that may happen after delivery. Additionally, omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to improve heart health, which may help those who had had high blood pressure during their pregnancy.

Food Sources Seafood (especially **salmon, tuna, sardines,** mackerel, herring**),** flaxseed, chia seeds, and walnuts



Vitamin D

Like calcium, vitamin D is important for maintaining strong bones. Vitamin D also plays a role in immune function, mood regulation, hormone balance, and heart health, all of which are crucial during the postpartum period.

Food Sources **Fortified breakfast cereal, milk, eggs, yogurt, fatty fish such as salmon and sardines, fortified soy beverages, fortified orange juice** and **mushrooms**

WIC-provided foods are bolded

Vitamins & Supplements

It is helpful to keep taking a **multivitamin** after delivery. Multivitamins can provide important nutrients that help the body heal and recover after giving birth. A multivitamin with folic acid is recommended to anyone who could potentially get pregnant, even if not actively trying. This is because if you were to become pregnant, even accidentally, the folic acid would help prevent brain and spinal birth defects. Also, folic acid helps your skin, hair and nails stay healthy, balances your mood, and helps with premenstrual syndrome (PMS) symptoms. Vitamin and mineral recommendations are different for those who are lactating. It is always a good idea to talk to your healthcare provider so they can give you recommendations on what kind of multivitamin to take based on your needs.

Meal Prep

Life with a new baby can get busy, so it is helpful to find ways to make snack time or mealtime faster and easier. This is where meal prep can help! Meal preparation, more commonly known as meal prep, is when you plan, prep, cook (sometimes), and store your snacks or meals to be eaten later. Meal prep allows you to focus on taking care of yourself and your new baby without worrying about cooking every day. Here are some simple tips to help you prepare meals during this time:



Accept Help
If friends, family, or your partner offer to help, let them! Bringing you meals or helping with cooking are great ways in which they can support you during this time. It is okay to ask for help, too



Plan Ahead
Make a meal plan for the first few weeks after your baby arrives. Think about what you like to eat, any dietary restrictions you have, and the nutrition that helps you feel like your best self. Also, keep your pantry full of basic foods like pasta, rice, canned goods, and spices. These can be used as a base for many meals



Batch Cooking
Spend some time cooking a lot of food at once to eat later. Make big portions of dishes like chili, spaghetti sauce, or curry, and freeze them in smaller amounts. You can also make complete meals that you can freeze, like casseroles, soups, and lasagnas. You can heat these up quickly when you do not want or have time to cook



Do Not Forget About Snacks
A balanced snack can help your energy levels during this time, and it can be easy to prep them ahead of time. Try to choose at least one item from two of these food groups: fruits or vegetables, grains, dairy, or protein. Here are some more tips for meal prepping snacks:

- **Pre-Cut:** Slice, dice, and chop your way to convenience. Pre-cut fruits and vegetables for a quick and easy snack option
- **Pre-Make and Store:** Prepare snacks in advance, then refrigerate or freeze. This works well for items like energy bites, yogurt parfaits, and smoothie packs
- **Pre-Portion and Package:** Divide snacks into serving-sized portions. This makes grabbing a snack on-the-go easy. Portioned nuts, trail mix, or whole-grain crackers are perfect for this and easy to pack into bags when you are away from home

Lastly, be flexible with your meal plans. The postpartum period can be unpredictable, so having different options ready will help you handle whatever comes your way.



Weight Changes After Delivery

There is a lot of pressure from society, friends, family, and social media to lose weight after delivery. How you feel about your body after childbirth can be an emotional topic for a lot of postpartum individuals, as there are a lot of body changes that come along with pregnancy and delivery. While you may want to get back to your pre-pregnancy weight as soon after delivery as possible, focusing only on getting back to your pre-pregnancy weight can contribute to stress, anxiety, and body image concerns. It is important to make your **mental well-being a top priority** during this transition time.



After childbirth, your body needs time to heal. Diets that limit how much food you eat or exclude certain foods or food groups might take important nutrients you need away from the healing process and slow down your recovery. Taking care of a newborn requires a lot of energy. **Not eating enough could leave you feeling tired and make it harder to care for your baby.** Also, if you are breastfeeding, your body requires additional calories to produce milk for your baby, so **drastically cutting calories can lower your milk production.**

Your body has gone through big changes during pregnancy and childbirth, so worrying about your postpartum body can cause feelings of sadness and unnecessary stress. Instead, **focus on overall wellness, including eating a variety of foods, staying hydrated, resting as much as you can, managing stress, and getting in some gentle and joyful movement** when your healthcare provider gives you the green light.

Remember, every postpartum body is different. If you are interested in weight management after childbirth, it is important to talk about your goals and concerns with a registered dietitian, who are available at WIC, or your healthcare provider. They can help you create a plan that looks at your individual needs and supports your overall health and well-being.



Hydration

Hydration is just as important during the postpartum period as it is during pregnancy. After giving birth, your body goes through a lot of changes as part of the healing process and staying hydrated can help your overall well-being and recovery. Your body depends on water to survive. When it does not have enough, you can become dehydrated.

Know the signs of dehydration

- Headaches and sluggishness
- Dry lips or sticky mouth
- Sleepiness and irritability
- Less urination or dark-colored urine (can also be caused by other health conditions)
- Flushed skin



Drinking more water when you see these signs will help keep you and your baby safe. Drinking water is the best way to stay hydrated and it is exactly what your body needs.

Hydration

How much water should you drink each day?

Maybe you have heard you need to drink a gallon a day? Or 8 glasses a day?

The amount of water needed is different for everyone and it depends on:

Your climate
if you live somewhere hot or humid, you will need to drink more water

Your activity level
those who move more during the day will need to drink more water

Since everyone's water needs are a little bit different, the best way to tell if you need to drink more water is by listening to your body.

Are you thirsty or experiencing signs of dehydration?

If yes – drink more water

Here are some tips to help drink more water:

Carry a water bottle with you wherever you go

Change up your water by

- Adding cut up fresh fruits like lemons, cucumbers, or berries
- Making ice cubes from 100% fruit juice or fresh fruit in water
- Gradually adding water to your 100% fruit juice. Over time add more water and less juice





Movement

Moving your body after having a baby can have many benefits for your body and mind. Like pregnancy, it is recommended to move your body for 150 minutes each week (or 30 minutes, 5 days a week) during the postpartum period. However, it is important to be careful and talk to your healthcare provider before starting any physical activity. Your provider can give you advice based on your situation. Their decision will be based on how you gave birth and your overall health. They can tell you when it is safe to start exercising and give you suggestions that are right for you.

Moving your body is not only good for your physical health but is also beneficial for your mental well-being. It can **improve mood, reduce stress, boost self-esteem, enhance brain function, decrease symptoms of anxiety and depression, promote better sleep, and help build relationships with other people.** One of the most important things is to participate in movement that you find fun and joyful.

Here are some tips for adding in movement after having a baby:



Start slow. Even if you moved a lot during pregnancy, your body needs time to recover. Begin with gentle exercises like walking, doing pelvic floor exercises (Kegels), and stretching. As you get stronger, you can increase how long and how hard you exercise



Choose low-impact activities. Right after having a baby, it is a good idea to choose movement that will not strain your joints or pelvic floor too much. Examples include walking, swimming (wait 6 weeks after a c-section), doing prenatal or postnatal yoga, and Pilates



Listen to your body. Pay attention to any pain, discomfort, or feeling overly tired during or after movement. If something does not feel right, take a break, or change the activity. It is important to respect your body's limits and not push yourself too hard, especially when you are first starting out



Get help for your pelvic floor. Those who are postpartum may benefit from specific programs to help with their pelvic floor muscles. These programs can strengthen the pelvic floor and address problems like bladder leakage or organ prolapse, where your pelvic floor becomes too weak to hold your organs in place. Please speak with your provider about a referral to a pelvic floor physical therapist



Find a friend. Participating in movement with a friend can be a great way to socialize, build relationships, and have more fun



Get support. It can be hard to find time for movement when you are taking care of a baby. Asking your partner, family, or friends for help with childcare or chores is a great way to get in some joyful movement

Remember, moving our bodies for pleasure means finding activities that make us happy. By gradually adding in joyful movement, we can create a positive relationship with physical activity, which improves our overall well-being and quality of life.



Sleep

Sleep, or lack of sleep, is a common issue that affects any caregiver taking care of a baby, especially a newborn. During this time, sleep can be disrupted for many reasons, such as the baby's need to feed or sleep patterns, physical discomfort, hormonal changes, and adjusting to new responsibilities.

Newborns do not have a regular sleep schedule and often wake up every few hours for feeding, changing, or seeking comfort. This is normal and very important as babies' stomachs are so small that they must eat every few hours.

Here are some tips for trying to get more sleep:

Share nighttime responsibilities. If possible, caregivers can take turns taking care of the baby during the night. This can involve switching to feed, change diapers, and soothe the baby back to sleep. Sharing these responsibilities allows each caregiver to get some uninterrupted sleep. You can also ask for help from family or friends

Nap. Taking short naps during the day can help make up for the lost sleep at night. Whenever the baby takes a nap, it is important for parents to rest as well, even if only for a short time. Try to avoid using this time to do things that can be done while the baby is awake

Sleep habits. Following good sleep habits can contribute to better sleep quality. Create a calm and comfortable sleep environment by keeping the bedroom dark, cool, and quiet. Establish a relaxing bedtime routine, like taking a warm bath or reading and avoiding screens, to tell your body that it is time to sleep

Seek support. Reach out to your support network, including your partner, family, and friends, for help. They can provide emotional support, help with household tasks, or care for the baby so you can get more rest

Self-care. Taking care of your own physical and mental well-being is important during this time. Eat regular meals, stay hydrated, and take part in gentle exercise (if approved by your healthcare provider). Prioritize activities that help you relax and reduce stress, like meditation or listening to soothing music. All of these activities can help promote better sleep

Talk to your healthcare provider. If you are experiencing severe sleep disturbances, it is important to discuss your concerns with your provider. They can give guidance, resources, and tips to improve your sleep and overall well-being

Remember that adjusting to a new baby takes time, and it is normal to have difficulties with sleep during this period. Be patient with yourself and your baby and look for help when needed. **As your baby grows and develops a more regular sleep pattern, your own sleep will begin to improve.**



Mental Health

The postpartum period is a time of significant emotional and hormonal changes. While it can be filled with joy and excitement, it is also common for postpartum individuals to experience a range of emotions, including sadness, anxiety, and mood swings. Taking care of your mental well-being is important during this time, as it directly affects your overall health and ability to care for yourself and your baby. In this section we will cover common emotional challenges and when you should ask for help or see your healthcare provider.

Baby Blues

The "baby blues" is a common and temporary emotional period that affects up to 80% of newly postpartum individuals. It is a normal reaction to hormonal and emotional changes that happen after childbirth. Symptoms can be different for each person, but they often include:

- Mood swings
- Being easily annoyed
- Crying a lot
- Feeling anxious
- Being sad
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Being tired
- Having trouble sleeping
- Changes in appetite

Baby blues usually happens within the first few days after childbirth and often goes away within 2 weeks without professional help. However, taking care of yourself and getting support from family and friends can be helpful. Resting, eating well, doing light exercise, and talking to someone about your feelings can help you feel better.

Baby blues is not the same as perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs), which are more serious and longer-lasting conditions. **While baby blues go away on their own, PMADs need medical attention and treatment.**

If baby blues symptoms get worse or last longer than two weeks, it is important to **talk to your provider.** They will check if the symptoms are a sign of a PMAD and give you the right support and treatment.

Remember that everyone's experience with baby blues can be different. It is important to take care of yourself and ask for help if you need it, so both you and your baby can be healthy.

Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMADs)

PMADs are a group of mental health conditions that can happen after having a baby. They are more serious than "baby blues" that many feel after giving birth. PMADs can happen at any time during pregnancy and up until the first year after childbirth and can affect a person's emotions and ability to function.

There are several different types of PMADs:



Perinatal depression (PD). PD affects about 15% of Perinatal people, making it the most common type of PMAD. Symptoms include persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and worthlessness. Those with PD may also have little to no interest in doing things they used to like doing, changes in appetite, trouble sleeping, feeling tired all the time, finding it hard to connect with their baby, and thinking about hurting themselves or their baby



Perinatal anxiety. Perinatal anxiety is when someone worries a lot, has racing thoughts, feels restless and cannot sit still, has issues with sleep or appetite, and gets easily annoyed. Those with perinatal anxiety often have constant fears and worries about their baby's safety and their own well-being. They may also have physical symptoms like dizziness, nausea, hot flashes, having a fast heartbeat, or changes to your breathing



Perinatal obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). This is different than OCD at other times in your life, which can put you at risk for Perinatal OCD. Perinatal OCD means having unwanted and repetitive thoughts or images related the baby that cause a lot of distress (obsessions) and it usually interferes with daily life. Those with perinatal OCD cannot control these thoughts and need to do certain things or think in a certain way to try to calm the anxiety (compulsions). These thoughts and actions often focus on the baby's safety, and those suffering from this may do things over and over again to feel better



Perinatal post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Some individuals develop perinatal PTSD after going through a traumatic childbirth. Symptoms can include reliving the trauma through flashbacks or nightmares, being very alert and jumpy, avoiding anything that reminds them of the trauma, having trouble sleeping or concentrating, and experiencing anxiety and panic attacks



Perinatal psychosis. Perinatal psychosis is rare but very serious. It usually happens within the first two weeks after childbirth but can appear anytime in the first year. Those with perinatal psychosis may see or hear things that are not real (hallucinations), have false beliefs (delusions), feel confused, and have very quick changes in their mood. It is a medical emergency and needs immediate attention

Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMADs)

It is important to know that PMADs are **not the person's fault**. Some things that increase a person's risk for PMADs include having a history of depression or anxiety, having a difficult pregnancy or childbirth, not having a lot of support from others, and going through stressful events.



Treating PMADs usually involves therapy, medication, or a combination of the two. Taking care of your mental well-being is crucial during the postpartum period. By recognizing the signs of perinatal mood disorders, practicing self-care, and seeking support when needed, you can navigate emotional challenges with resilience and strength. Remember, reaching out for help is a sign of strength, and there are resources available to support you on your journey to emotional well-being.

Get Help

If you are experiencing any mental health issues while pregnant or postpartum, help is available to you. Please contact your healthcare provider immediately to follow up.

Additional resources include:

Postpartum Support International at **1-800-944-4773**

National Maternal Mental Health Hotline at **1-833-852-6262 (1-833-TLC-MAMA)**

Environmental Concerns

Alcohol

As a postpartum person, it is important to be careful with alcohol, as your body might handle alcohol differently now. If you plan to drink, make sure someone else can take care of your baby while you do. If you feel like using alcohol to deal with stress or feelings, get emotional help by talking to a doctor or counselor instead. Also, check with your doctor to make sure alcohol will not affect any medications you are taking. Be responsible with alcohol and keep both you and your baby safe.

Please contact your healthcare provider, a local **Alcoholics Anonymous** chapter, or a local alcohol treatment center if you feel you need more help

Tobacco/ Nicotine Exposure

Using tobacco after having a baby can be harmful for the parent and the other people at home, especially the new baby. Smoking or vaping can cause serious health problems like heart disease and lung cancer. It is even more dangerous to smoke near babies since they can easily get sick. Smoking can also make you feel sadder and more stressed during a time that is already tough.

If you, or someone you know, would like to connect with a free, highly trained quit coach who can help provide you with a variety of tools, please visit
How to Quit Smoking
or call **800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669)**

Safety

Abuse is mistreatment that is meant to harm, manipulate, or intimated someone. Abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, financial, or psychological and can be committed by a current or former family or household member or intimate partner. It is common for abuse to go unreported, with most abuse victims being women.

If you are a victim of abuse, help is available. Please contact the **National 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline**
at **800-799-7233.**
If it is an emergency, call 911

Drug Use

It is best to stay away from drugs you are not prescribed and to take any medications you are prescribed as directed because it could hurt you and affect how you take care of yourself and others.

If you are struggling with substance or drug use, you can contact the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**
at **800-662-4357(HELP**) for referrals to resources in your area

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   Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

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