

Maternal Health: Postpartum Care

SAN FRANCISCO
HEALTH PLAN



Here for you

Learn About Postpartum Care, Doulas, Depression, and Treatment

The “postpartum period” is the time after you give birth. This period usually lasts 6 to 8 weeks but can last up to 1 year. During this time, you may see changes in your body, mind, and diet. While your new baby needs care, make sure to take care of your own body and mind too. Talk to your provider about how to keep you and your baby healthy.



You can get a \$25 gift card after your postpartum visit!

You must see your provider 3 to 8 weeks after the end of your pregnancy. Visit **SFHP Health & Wellness** to learn more.



Normal Changes in Your Body

- During the first few days after giving birth, you may have a heavy menstrual period. You may pass small blood clots. Vaginal discharge will become less, change to yellow or pale brown, and then to white. Please make sure you use pads instead of tampons.
- Breast milk will come in 3 to 5 days after giving birth. Nipples may feel sore. Your breasts may leak at times.
- You may get constipation (hard to pass stool).
- Stitches may burn or sting. Ask your provider for pain medicine when you need it.
- Use a warm pack or hot water bottle for cramping.
- Put on a spray or cream medicine to help with pain from hemorrhoids (swollen veins).
- Manage pain in the area around your vagina and anus (called the perineal area). Place an ice pack on your perineal area for 10-20 minutes to lower pain and swelling. You can do this each hour as needed. Take a warm shower or bath as often as you want.



In the First Few Weeks After Giving Birth

- **Get help with everyday tasks.** Ask family, friends, or get help from a doula (birth worker).
- **Drink a lot of fluids.** Try to drink 8 to 12 cups (64 to 96 ounces) of water each day.
- **Talk to your provider about birth control.** Breastfeeding does not stop you from getting pregnant. Learn more about birth control with the “Birth Control Methods” fact sheet from **SFHP Health & Wellness**.
- **Talk to your provider about when to go back to work.** Each person feels ready to work at their own time.
- **Plan your next postpartum visit with your provider.** You may have 1 visit in 1-2 weeks, and another visit in 3-8 weeks after giving birth. Please ask your provider if you have any questions.



For more information call Customer Service at **1(415) 547-7800** or visit **sfhp.org/health-ed**

24/7 Nurse Advice Line **1(877) 977-3397** | Talk to a doctor 24/7 **sfhp.org/teladoc**



Why Breastfeeding Is Important

Breastmilk is the best food for your baby!

Breastmilk:

- Has all the **nutrients** your baby needs for proper growth
- Lowers the risk of **ear infections and colds**
- Lowers the risk of **obesity, diabetes, and other illness**
- Is **easier for your baby to digest** than formula
- Is always at the **right temperature**, not too hot or cold

Breastfeeding also helps you:

- **Recover** more quickly from childbirth
- **Lower your risk** for breast and ovarian cancers, and type 2 diabetes
- Feel close to your baby and **increase bonding**
- **Lose weight**
- **Reduce cost** from buying formula or feeding items



Talk with your provider before taking any medicine, herbal or dietary supplements, or drinking alcohol or caffeine while breastfeeding.



Learn more at **CDC** about how to clean and store breast milk and feeding items.

Get Help with Breastfeeding

The first 2 weeks of breastfeeding can sometimes be hard. Ask for help if you need it, and don't wait! During postpartum care, a doula can help you learn to breastfeed. A doula is a health worker who can give you social support while you are pregnant, in labor, and after giving birth. You can get a doula at no cost with Medi-Cal.

To learn more about getting a doula, call SFHP Customer Service at **1(415) 547-7800**, TTY **1(888) 883-7347**.

For other breastfeeding help you can call:

- Your prenatal **provider**
- Your delivery hospital's **lactation consultant**



- **Women, Infants and Children (WIC)**

Supplemental Nutrition Program. WIC offices are at community clinics and Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital. Find a WIC clinic and hours at **sf.gov**.



- **La Leche League** for resources and support from other mothers. Visit **llli.org**.

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Postpartum Diet

Making healthy food choices and staying active will help your baby's growth. This will also help you stay healthy while breastfeeding. Talk with your provider about what diet and vitamins are right for you.



- Pick healthy choices such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein, and low-fat or fat-free dairy milk or yogurt (or lactose-free dairy or fortified soy versions). Learn more about healthy food choices with the "Healthier Eating" fact sheet from **SFHP Health & Wellness**.



- Visit **MyPlate.gov** to learn more about eating healthy during postpartum.



- You may be able to get healthy food packages as part of the **Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program**.

Urgent Warning Signs—Call Your Provider Right Away!

- Headache that won't go away or gets worse over time
- Feeling dizzy or faint
- Changes in your vision—blurry, or seeing spots that won't go away
- Fever over 100.4°F or higher
- Swollen hands or face
- Hard time breathing



- Chest pain or fast-beating heart
- Nausea and throwing up
- Belly pain that won't go away
- Bleeding or discharge from the vagina after giving birth
- Swelling, redness or pain in your leg or arm
- Feeling tired and overwhelmed
- Thoughts about hurting yourself or your baby

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Postpartum Depression and Treatment



Depression is more than just feeling down or having a bad day. When a sad mood lasts for a long time and affects your normal actions each day, you may be depressed. Your body and mind go through many changes after giving birth. Depression or anxiety after pregnancy is common and can be treated. 1 in 8 people feel symptoms of depression after having a baby, also known as “postpartum depression.”



Please visit **CDC** to learn more about depression during and after pregnancy.

Use this checklist to help you talk with your provider. Check the boxes that best match your feelings over the past 2 weeks. Take it with you to your next health visit.

In the past 2 weeks (14 days) how often have you:	None	A few days	More than a week (7 days)	Every day
Felt sad, “down,” or low?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Felt more tired than usual, or have less energy in the day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Felt upset or annoyed at small things?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had a hard time with focus, thinking, or making choices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not felt hungry or ate too much?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Felt worried you might hurt yourself or like you wanted to die?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had trouble enjoying things that used to be fun?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Felt like you have no one to talk to?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Felt that you can’t make it through the day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Felt worthless or hopeless?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had headaches, backaches, or stomach aches?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Postpartum Depression and Treatment (continued)

In the past 2 weeks (14 days) how often have you:	None	A few days	More than a week (7 days)	Every day
Had a hard time sleeping when your baby sleeps, or sleeping too much?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Felt numb or not close to your baby?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had scary or negative thoughts about your baby?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worried that you might hurt your baby?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Felt worried or scared that something bad might happen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Felt guilty or ashamed about your job as a mom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Postpartum depression can last 7 months or longer if not treated. Most people get better with treatment. Treatment may include medicine, counseling, or talking with a mental health expert.

Your Primary Care Provider* (PCP) can connect you with a Carelon Behavioral Health specialist who sees people dealing with postpartum depression. Within 48 hours they will reach out to you and give you a depression screening at no cost.

If you have any concerns about feeling close with your child, Carelon Behavioral Health offers support for infant-parent bonding. Talk with your PCP or call Carelon Behavioral Health at **1(855) 371-8117** to learn more or make an appointment.



You can also call **CalHOPE Connect** which offers safe, secure, and culturally sensitive emotional support. A peer or community mental health worker can give you support with stress, anxiety, depression, and any other worries you face. CalHOPE protects your information. They do not need your full or last name, address, or phone number. You can **chat online** or call the CalHOPE 24/7 warmline at **1(833) 317-4673**.

**Your Primary Care Provider is the doctor, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner in charge of your healthcare.*

Resources:  **"Urgent Maternal Warning Signs"**
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
cdc.gov



"Your Guide to Breastfeeding"
Office on Women's Health
womenshealth.gov



Breastfeeding
Office on Women's Health
womenshealth.gov



"Breastfeeding Basics for Moms"
United States Department of Agriculture
usda.gov



"Tips for Breastfeeding Moms"
United States Department of Agriculture
usda.gov



Pregnancy and Breastfeeding
USDA | MyPlate
myplate.gov

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