



SUPPORT DURING RECOVERY AFTER CHILDBIRTH:

The first three months after childbirth are called the “4th Trimester” as a woman’s body recovers from the physical and emotional stresses of pregnancy and delivery. Be on the lookout for any setbacks—physical, mental, or emotional—and help make sure your loved one gets immediate medical attention.

RISKS & CONCERNS:

- Excessive bleeding.
- Infected stitches (if C-section or episiotomy performed).
- Hospital infection.
- Blood clots.
- Anxiety.
- Depression, ranging from “the blues” to suicidal thoughts.

HOW TO HELP

RECOVER AFTER CHILDBIRTH:

- Continue all good hand-washing practices** to protect both mother and baby.
- In the hospital, think ahead to recovery at home.** Ask about specific instructions for home care of both the mother and her newborn.
- Ask about medications**—use our handy discharge **Medication Record** to take notes.
- Be present for the discharge conversation** your loved one will have with a nurse just before going home. (Often, Care Partners leave to get the car, but that can wait!) Final instructions are critical and a good time to ask questions! Take notes or ask to record the conversation on your phone.
- Make sure the discharge care plan includes:**
 - List of warning signs, especially life-threatening complications, and how to respond.
 - Also, be sure to get contact info for doctors, hospital help line, and any other resources for immediate medical help.
 - Warning signs of excessive bleeding and blood clots.
 - Signs of depression and anxiety.
 - Lactation and breastfeeding support contact information.
 - The time and date of first follow-up medical appointments for mother and baby.
- Go to any follow-up doctor appointments**, prepared with a list of all questions the new mother and you may have.
- Have candid conversations with your loved one** about their emotions and feelings. Ask, “How are you really doing?”

CONTACT A DOCTOR OR GO TO AN ER/URGENT CARE CENTER FOR:

- Vaginal bleeding.
- Trouble breathing, shortness of breath.
- Fast heartbeat.
- Redness/pain in leg; a charley-horse that won’t go away.
- High blood pressure.
- Chest pain.
- Fever, chills, body aches.
- Redness, pain and swelling at stitch areas.
- Foul-smelling vaginal discharge.
- Severe nausea or vomiting.
- Headache that won’t go away, and is worsening.
- Cramping.
- Changes in vision.
- Inability to pee or fully relieve bladder.
- Puffiness or fluid build-up.