

Natural Help 4...

Postpartum Care



What is Postpartum Care & Recovery?

The recovery and healing process following childbirth is usually a tremendous adjustment for most new mothers. During this period of [postpartum care](#) and recovery your body needs time to **heal physically and emotionally** before it returns to its pre-pregnancy state. New moms often feel much stress because of the change in their routine and the responsibility of caring for a new baby. Gradually, you will begin to feel better and resume your normal activities. Although you may face many challenges during the recovery period, celebrate and enjoy each precious moment with your bundle of joy.

Physical and emotional changes after birth

A number of significant physical and emotional changes take place after giving birth to your baby and these include:

Physical changes

- After pain
- Lochia (bloody vaginal discharge)
- Episiotomy
- Constipation
- Sore and engorged breasts
- Hemorrhoids
- Urinary and fecal incontinence
- Postpartum weight

Emotional changes

- Baby blues and low mood
- Postpartum depression

Physical changes

After the birth of your baby, you **will experience many physical changes as your body starts to recover**. You will experience after birth pains when your uterus contracts and shrinks – this generally lasts for a couple of days. Your physician will prescribe medication to relieve the pain and discomfort. Spotting or bleeding (lochia) that is very similar to a menstrual period may last for up to 2 to 6 weeks or longer. Wear thick, maternity pads and avoid the use of tampons while you are bleeding.

It is also generally recommended that you abstain from sexual intercourse for

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about 4 to 6 weeks, and remember to discuss birth control options with your doctor. Women who have had an episiotomy can **relieve the soreness and pain by applying an ice pack** to the affected area. It is also vital that you keep the perineum area cleansed to prevent infection. If you have had a cesarean birth, you would need a longer recovery period than those who had vaginal or natural birth. Walking and climbing stairs may be painful or uncomfortable following a C-section, but it is essential that you try to move around.

Your breasts may feel sore, tender and engorged with milk even if you are not breastfeeding. Sore breasts can be **alleviated by applying warm or cold compresses or cabbage leaves** to the breasts, taking warm showers, or numbing the pain with ice wrapped in a towel. Breastfeeding the baby frequently and on demand, and checking that he or she is latched on properly, will also make breastfeeding easier.

Feeling tired and suffering from interrupted sleep routine is only natural for mothers with babies. **Sleep when the baby sleeps and rest as much as possible.** Let your partner give you a break by helping with feedings or allow family and friends to occupy the baby while you have time out.

New mothers often find that they have developed constipation, hemorrhoids, swelling in the legs and feet as well as urinary and fecal incontinence. Drinking plenty of water and eating foods containing fiber such as fresh fruit and vegetables **can relieve constipation or hemorrhoids.** A stool softener may also be helpful, but check with your doctor before using laxatives or enemas. Swelling in the legs and feet can be reduced by keeping them elevated. Incontinence does eventually go away but practicing Kegel exercises regularly can improve this condition.

Many women pick up additional weight during pregnancy and then struggle to shed those extra pounds. It is very important to **remember not to diet or start an exercise plan immediately** after giving birth – allow your body to recover first and then consult your doctor.

For mothers who are breastfeeding and want to slim down, it is recommended that they wait until the baby is at least two months old. Breastfeeding also helps to use up extra calories and lose the excess weight. If your weight is bothering you, make sure that you do not lose too much too quickly and shed the weight the healthy way. **Eat healthy, well balanced during the healing period** and when you are fully recovered, start exercising again.

Emotional changes

Most new mothers may feel sad or experience the “baby blues” after giving birth – this is normal! A change in your hormone levels, feelings of anxiety and stress about your change in routine, adapting to motherhood and being tired all the time can have a negative impact on your emotions.

Try not to be too hard on yourself. Speak to your partner or a friend who has had a baby about what you are feeling. If these feelings worsen and you are unable to take of yourself or the baby, consult your doctor immediately. You may be suffering from postpartum depression which has symptoms such as crying uncontrollably, feeling sad, depressed or guilty, trouble concentrating, mood swings, fatigue, weight gain or weight loss. This condition is treated with



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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

antidepressant medication or therapy.

Help for Postpartum Care & Recovery

[Postpartum care](#) and recovery length varies widely from woman to woman. It can take weeks, even months for your body to heal and return to its pre-pregnancy state. Women who have had surgery (C-section) usually need a longer recovery period than those who had vaginal birth.

After birth pains are often experienced for a couple of days following the birth. This occurs when the uterus contracts and shrinks. Pain medication such as analgesics may be prescribed if the **cramps cause too much pain and discomfort**. A bloody vaginal discharge known as lochia will also occur after birth, indicating that the placental site is healing. It lasts between 10 to 14 days.

Initially, the bleeding will be bright red similar to a menstrual period and gradually turn dark brown, then pinkish in color until it becomes a slight white discharge and completely disappears. While the lochia is present, wear thick sanitary pads and avoid using tampons. Abstain from sexual intercourse and **cleanse the perineum area** to prevent infection.

If you had an episiotomy (an incision that is made in the perineum area and repaired with stitches), healing may take a few weeks. Medications can relieve pain and soreness apply an ice pack on the affected area or take a tepid bath.

With a cesarean birth, the **abdominal incision takes longer to heal** – sometimes up to six weeks. The cesarean incision may be painful after the anesthesia wears off, and pain relief medications may be prescribed. Although walking is initially difficult and painful, it is necessary to move around. Take care of the incision area properly until it has healed fully.

You may experience sore breasts whether you have decided to breastfeed or not. Breastfeeding **reduces engorgement and increases milk supply**. To relieve the discomfort of breast fullness, take warm showers, apply warm or cold compresses to your breasts, or numb the pain with ice.

Express milk in sterile plastic containers and freeze for later. While breastfeeding may be sore and painful in the beginning, with the correct technique and lots of practice it does improve! Breastfeeding also helps you to shed your pregnancy weight and helps **strengthens the bond between mother and child**.

During the healing process, you may experience other physical problems such as hemorrhoids, constipation, urinary and fecal incontinence as well as difficulty having intercourse. Use a stool softener for hemorrhoids and constipation and **incorporate more fiber-rich foods and water into your diet**. Applying cold packs on the affected area are also helpful. Avoid the use of suppositories, laxatives and enemas.

Practice Kegel exercises to **strengthen pelvic floor muscles and reduce incontinence**. Incontinence does resolve itself gradually, but if it continues, consult your doctor. Wait at least six weeks before resuming sexual activity. Sex may cause discomfort initially and you may experience anxiety about having it – ease gently into it and discuss your fears and insecurities with your partner. You may also wish to use birth control methods such as contraceptive pills, condoms

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diaphragm, IUDs or spermicidal jellies.

Most new mothers suffer from interrupted sleep routines and fatigue. Try and get as much rest as possible by sleeping when the baby sleeps, **managing your time effectively**, accepting help from your partner, friends and family as well as making time for yourself. Keep in mind that although you may want to be able to do it all, you are not superwoman!

Eating healthily and exercising is very **essential during this healing period**. Start exercising as soon as your doctor has declared you fit enough to. Exercise will help you get your pre-pregnancy body back, and increase your energy levels and sense of well-being.

It is natural to **feel emotional after the birth of your baby** and is very common amongst new mothers. “Baby blues” is a result of changes in hormonal levels – a drop in estrogen and progesterone levels, unexpected birth experiences, lack of sleep caused by fatigue and issues with body image. New mothers often feel sadness, irritability, anxiety and bouts of crying.

Getting **adequate sleep, learning to relax and taking time for yourself** can help overcome “baby blues”. “Baby blues” can progress into [postpartum depression](#) which causes mood swings, guilt, anxiety and continuous sadness. Antidepressants may be prescribed as well as therapy or counseling to relieve the symptoms of [postpartum depression](#).

Natural Remedies

Herbal and homeopathic remedies are a more natural alternative to conventional medications and are highly effective in the recovery process following childbirth, irrespective if it was vaginal birth or a cesarean section. Carefully selected ingredients such as Silica, Arnica, and Mag.phos promote [postpartum recovery](#), relieve aches and pains, and assist with healing after cesarean birth. In addition, Passiflora incarnate and Angelica sinensis (Don Quai) acts as a hormone regulator and **encourages a sense of calm** and relaxation.

Tips to help you recover from giving birth

There are several things that you can do to speed up your birth recovery and adjust to being a new mother:

- Build a network of family and friends that can help you during those first few weeks after the baby is born
- Make sure that you get plenty of rest and a few nights of uninterrupted sleep – sleep when the baby sleeps
- Share feeding schedules with your partner or husband
- Preparing for the arrival of your baby is essential – freeze meals ahead of time so that do not have to worry about cooking and have a generous supply of baby care products (diapers, bathcare supplies, clothing and blankets) on hand
- Create a resource list with useful contact numbers such as your public health unit, breastfeeding clinic, nearest 24-hour drug store, friends and family you can contact who have had a baby recently or take-out restaurants or places that deliver food or groceries



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- Speak to other mothers and find out how they coped or what pregnancy problems they faced
- Eat healthy, well balanced meals and drink plenty of water to boost your immune system, reduce fatigue and increase energy levels
- Make time for yourself away from your baby such as relaxing in a warm, bubble bath, take a short walk or go to the hairdresser
- Set aside time for yourself and partner together
- Hire a cleaning service or housekeeper to clean weekly, or learn to lower your housekeeping standards
- Embrace motherhood, be positive in your abilities as a new mother and learn to enjoy it

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called ‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term ‘holistic’ medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing

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symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While ‘standardized’ extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don’t make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

Related Natural Remedies:

Birth-Heal: Promote fast recovery and healing after labor, childbirth or Caesarean section, relieve discomfort and calm nerves



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In addition, the product has been formulated to the highest therapeutic standards and manufactured under strict pharmaceutical conditions, in consultation by our clinical psychologist, with ingredients specially chosen for safety and effectiveness during pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and infancy.

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Easiotomy Cream: Prepare, soothe, heal and reduce discomfort to the perineum before childbirth and after delivery

Easiotomy Cream is a 100% natural, safe and effective cream made from selected herbs, minerals and vitamins specifically for the perineal area before and after childbirth.

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Easiotomy Cream is formulated to the highest therapeutic standards and manufactured under strict pharmaceutical conditions, in consultation by our clinical psychologist and her team of natural health experts, using ingredients specially chosen for their safety and effectiveness.

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Like all Native Remedies products, NewMama Drops has been especially formulated by our Clinical Psychologist and her team of natural health experts. All Native Remedies natural remedies are formulated to the highest therapeutic standards and manufactured under strict pharmaceutical conditions for a healthier, more natural existence for you and your loved ones.

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