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PSYCHOLOGY



Postpartum *Warning Signs*

The signs worth acting on, sorted by when they tend to show up. When in doubt, make the call.

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Know when to *make the call*

Your body goes through an enormous amount after birth, and most aches and changes are a normal part of healing. But a few signs are not, and knowing them matters. These are sorted by when they usually appear. You are never overreacting by calling. Trust your gut, and when something feels wrong, act on it.

If it is an emergency, do not wait

Life-threatening emergency	911
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline	call or text 988
Maternal Mental Health Hotline	1-833-852-6262
Postpartum Support International	1-800-944-4773

First 24 hours

PHYSICAL EMERGENCIES

Heavy bleeding. Soaking more than one pad an hour, clots bigger than a golf ball, or feeling faint.	CALL 911
Chest pain or trouble breathing. Any chest pressure, pain, or shortness of breath. Could be a blood clot.	CALL 911
Sudden severe headache. Especially with vision changes or neck stiffness.	GO TO ER

First week

DAYS 1 TO 7

Fever over 100.4°F. Can signal an infection.	OB TODAY
Pain or swelling in one leg. Redness, warmth, or calf pain when walking. Could be a clot.	URGENT CARE
Vision changes. Blurred vision, spots, or flashing lights. Can be a sign of high blood pressure.	OB NOW
Incision trouble. A C-section or perineal incision that opens, drains, or smells.	WITHIN 24H

The weeks and months *after*

Some of the most important signs are not physical, and they show up later, once the early fog lifts. Postpartum depression and anxiety do not always look like sadness. They can look like rage, dread, or numbness.

Weeks 2 to 6

BODY & MIND

Severe mood changes, or rage. Intense sadness, anxiety, anger, or feeling disconnected from your baby for more than two weeks. **CALL PROVIDER**

Thoughts of harm, or losing touch with reality. Any thoughts of harming yourself or the baby, or hearing or seeing things that are not there. **988 OR ER NOW**

Cannot sleep even when you can. Wired, racing, unable to rest for days. **URGENT MH CARE**

Breast red, hot, and painful. With fever, chills, or body aches. Likely mastitis. **OB WITHIN 24H**

6 weeks & beyond

ONGOING

Depression or anxiety that lingers. Sadness, worry, or panic that gets in the way of daily life. **SCHEDULE SUPPORT**

Heavy bleeding returns. Bleeding that had stopped comes back, or continues past six weeks. **CALL YOUR OB**

Intrusive, scary thoughts. Frightening images or what-ifs, even ones you would never act on. Common and treatable. **TALK TO PROVIDER**

Not feeling like yourself. A persistent sense that something is off, even if you cannot name it. **TRUST IT, CALL**

When you are not sure. If you cannot tell how serious something is, treat it as more urgent, not less. It is always okay to call your provider and simply ask.

ONE MORE THING

You are not *overreacting*

You know your body better than anyone. If something feels wrong, do not wait it out or talk yourself out of it. Providers would far rather hear from you and reassure you than have you wait at home. Calling early is not dramatic. It is exactly the right thing to do.

REMEMBER

- ◇ It is always okay to call your provider.
- ◇ You are not overreacting, and you are not a bother.
- ◇ Early treatment is almost always easier treatment.
- ◇ If you cannot reach your own provider, use the numbers below.

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This guide is educational and does not replace medical advice from your own provider. When something does not feel right, reach out to them directly.