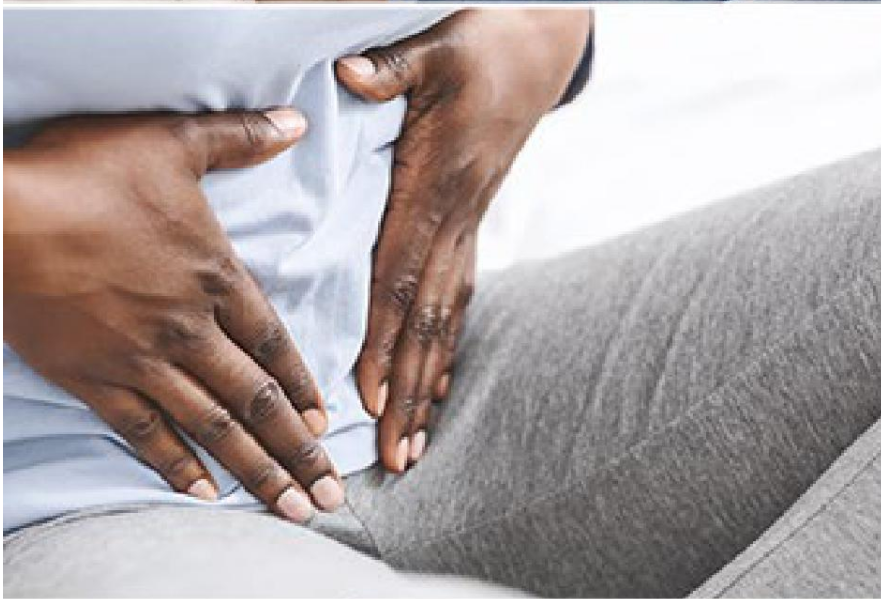




## Postpartum Care After a Vaginal Birth



### Overview

After you give birth, your body needs time to heal. We call this the "postpartum" period. It usually lasts about six weeks. It's important to follow your care plan during this time so you can make a full recovery.

### Common problems

So, what types of issues can you expect? It's common to have vaginal soreness and sore breasts. You may have contractions and vaginal discharge. You may have problems with peeing and pooping. You can have weight loss, hair loss and skin changes. And you may have severe mood swings.

### Pelvic rest

Let's talk about some basics of care. First, you'll want to avoid putting anything into your vagina during the first six weeks. We call this "pelvic rest." So don't have sex. Don't use a douche or tampons. And you need to let your rectal area heal, too. Your care provider may tell you to use a stool softener so you can pass bowel movements more easily.

### Avoid strains

You'll also want to avoid anything that can strain your body. So don't lift heavy things or engage in strenuous exercise. And talk to your care provider about when it will be safe for you to drive after giving birth.

### Mental health

And finally, know that it's normal to have feelings like sadness and anxiety after childbirth. But a deep sadness you still feel weeks after giving birth is called "postpartum depression." If you have this, tell someone so you can get the care you need.

### Conclusion

By following your care plan, you can help make sure your recovery goes as smoothly as possible.