

Postpartum Warning Signs

Your health matters. Most people recover well after birth, but serious problems can occur up to one year postpartum. Know the warning signs, trust your instincts, and get help right away if something does not feel right.

Acting quickly can save lives.



Medical Emergency - Call 9-1-1

Get EMERGENCY help right away for:

- Chest pain or pressure
- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- A seizure or collapse
- Any thoughts about causing harm to yourself, your baby, or others
- Heavy bleeding that soaks through a pad every hour for two or more hours
- Feeling very weak, dizzy, or faint. **Do not wait.** These signs can be life-threatening.

See your health care provider or call HealthLink BC 8-1-1 right away if:

- You pass blood clots larger than a golf ball
- Vaginal bleeding increases or smells bad
- You feel like you have the flu or have an unexplained fever over 38°C (100°F)
- Redness, pain, or pus around stitches or incision
- You have headaches, changes in your vision or abdominal pain
- Increased swelling of face, hands, or legs
- Fast or uneven heartbeat
- One leg that is red, painful, swollen, or feels warm or cooler than usual
- Severe belly pain
- Pain that suddenly gets worse and is not relieved by rest or medication
- Breast or chest pain/redness not relieved by feeding or pumping
- Sadness, worry, anger, or panic that does not improve
- Trouble sleeping even when your baby sleeps
- Feeling hopeless or unable to care for yourself or your baby

Important reminders:

- Some warning signs can happen up to 1 year after birth
- Always tell health care providers: "I had a baby on (date) and I am breastfeeding or chestfeeding (if applicable)."
- If you cannot reach your provider, call HealthLink BC 8-1-1 or go to the emergency department
- It is always better to get checked than to wait

Important numbers:

My health care provider: _____

Phone number: _____

Nearest emergency department: _____

Public Health Nurse: _____

You know your body the best. Trust your instincts. If something feels wrong, get help.

Newborn Warning Signs

You know your baby best. Trust your instincts. Know the warning signs, and contact your baby's health care provider if something does not seem right.

Acting early can make a difference.



Call 911 right away if your baby:

- Is not breathing. Start CPR right away.
- Does not respond to you – may feel floppy or limp.
- Has a seizure – may look like shaking or jerking that you cannot stop.

Go to the emergency room or urgent care if your baby has:

- Pauses in breathing that worry you
- Fast breathing (over 60 breaths per minute when counted for 1 minute)
- Noisy breathing, like wheezing or whistling
- Sucking in below or between the ribs or at the neck when breathing
- A sudden change in skin colour (a sudden change in colour means your baby looks blue, grey, or very pale, especially around the mouth, lips, or tongue)
- Green, bloody or dark brown (coffee colour) spit-up (can be very serious and needs urgent care)
- Yellow skin or eyes and seems very sleepy and is refusing to drink (may be jaundice and should be checked by a healthcare provider)

Call your baby's provider or HealthLink BC 811 if your baby has:

- A temperature below 36.5°C (97.7°F) or above 38°C (100.4°F)
- Baby's crying is constant or louder than usual

Feeding concerns that may include:

- Forceful or projectile vomiting
- Fewer than 8 feedings in 24 hours
- Needing to be woken for most feedings
- Refusing several feedings in a row
- Trouble sucking or swallowing
- Feeding for shorter times or taking less than usual

Changes in diapers that may include:

- Fewer than 4 wet diapers in 24 hour after Day 4
- A belly that looks swollen or feels hard
- Blood in the diaper or poop that is gray or white

Signs of illness or infection that may include:

- Redness, odor or fluid around the belly button
- Bleeding or fluid after a circumcision
- Cough
- Runny or stuffed nose
- Poop is watery and bad-smelling
- Poor feeding, lethargy, irritability, fever or fever with rash

**All babies are different.
Trust your instincts.
Get help if something does
not feel right to you.**

**See Baby's Best Chance:
Baby Medical Care
for more information**