Postpartum (or postnatal) refers to the period after childbirth. Most often, the postpartum period is the first six to eight weeks after [delivery](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/9675-pregnancy-types-of-delivery), or until your body returns to its pre-pregnancy state. But the symptoms and changes that occur during the postpartum period can last far beyond eight weeks. Major body and life changes are happening at the same time during the postpartum period. Some changes are physical — for example, breast engorgement and [vaginal bleeding](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/symptoms/17899-vaginal-bleeding). Other changes occur due to changing [hormones](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/22464-hormones). The bottom line is, giving birth is a major physical and emotional challenge. Being a caregiver and adjusting to life with an infant during the postpartum period is also incredibly demanding.

Pay attention to how you feel after giving birth and let your healthcare provider know if something feels off. Just because you gave birth doesn’t mean your care ends or that your health isn’t important. You should try prioritizing resting and [taking care of your health](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/9679-postpartum-care) in addition to caring for your baby.

Your healthcare provider will schedule postpartum checkups with you so they can continue to monitor your recovery and healing. It’s important to attend these appointments because this is where your provider can identify potential complications. This is also a time when you can ask questions and have honest conversations about your healing.