Your recovery — like your [pregnancy](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/9709-pregnancy-am-i-pregnant) — is unique to you. There isn’t a one-size-fits-all timeline to postpartum. But there’s a general timeline of what you can expect.

Some of the things [you can expect](https://health.clevelandclinic.org/postpartum-recovery) in the hours and days immediately after birth are:

* **Your**[**uterus**](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/body/22467-uterus)**needs to shrink back to its usual size**. This causes cramps and vaginal bleeding. Your provider may even massage your uterus through your belly to help it get smaller.
* **Hormonal shifts**. This can cause symptoms like [hot flashes](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/symptoms/24631-postpartum-night-sweats), changes to your mood and [headaches](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/postpartum-headache).
* [**Breast engorgement**](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/breast-engorgement). Your breasts will produce milk, and even if you choose not to [breastfeed](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/5182-breastfeeding), you’ll have painful and swollen breasts.
* [**Perineal**](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/body/24381-perineum)**soreness.** It’s normal to have pain in the space between your vagina and anus (butthole) if you gave birth vaginally. Up to 70% of people have some degree of [vaginal tearing](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/21212-vaginal-tears-during-childbirth) during childbirth. People who have a [C-section](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/7246-cesarean-birth-c-section) will feel extra sore around the incision site for a few days.
* [**Swelling**](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/12564-edema)**from extra fluids**. This is typically normal and your body’s way of getting rid of fluid you accumulate during pregnancy. Your swelling should go down within a week. When swelling comes with symptoms like chest pain and trouble breathing, it could be a sign of something more serious.
* **Fatigue**. Labor, childbirth and caring for a newborn may introduce you to a new level of exhaustion. Feeling tired for the days and weeks after you give birth is very normal. Trying to rest as much as you can whenever possible will help you feel better.