**What are the three stages of postpartum?**

Healthcare providers classify postpartum into three phases: the acute phase, the subacute phase and the delayed phase.

* **Acute phase**: This is the first six to 12 hours after you give birth. You’re most likely to experience conditions like [eclampsia](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/24333-eclampsia), [postpartum hemorrhage](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/22228-postpartum-hemorrhage) and certain medical emergencies during this time. Your care will include things like your provider monitoring your [blood pressure](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diagnostics/17649-blood-pressure), heart rate and bleeding, and checking you for excess swelling.
* **Subacute phase**: This phase begins around 24 hours after birth and lasts for about two to six weeks. Your body is still changing, but you’re less likely to experience a medical emergency. Some of the concerns your provider may have during this period include [cardiomyopathy](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/23220-peripartum-cardiomyopathy), [postpartum depression](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/9312-postpartum-depression) and symptoms related to [urinary incontinence](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/17596-urinary-incontinence).
* **Delayed phase**: This phase lasts from about six weeks postpartum until six months postpartum. Changes during this phase are gradual and mainly consist of your muscles and tissues returning to their pre-pregnancy state. Your healthcare provider may treat you for conditions like [pelvic floor dysfunction](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/14459-pelvic-floor-dysfunction), [painful sex](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/12325-dyspareunia-painful-intercourse) and [uterine prolapse](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/16030-uterine-prolapse) in the delayed phase.