

# MAKE A PLAN

# My Health Beyond Pregnancy



## WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

Your pregnancy and birth experiences may have been hard because of medical issues such as hypertension and preeclampsia. You deserve physical and emotional support around you to process your experience and to understand what happens next. Make sure your body can recover and rest in a place where you can be cared for by those around you. Reach out for help with any food, safety, housing, childcare, or transportation concerns.

## Know Your Risk

### WHY IS MY FOLLOW-UP CARE IMPORTANT?

Telling your pregnancy story can help you get the care you need from your healthcare providers. Working together to monitor your current and future health can help prevent heart problems now and later in life.



**4x** High Blood Pressure



**2x** Heart Disease



**2x** Stroke

Use this checklist to note any pregnancy complications you may wish to discuss with your healthcare provider.

My birth experience was affected by:	My baby/babies experienced:
<input type="checkbox"/> Preeclampsia <input type="checkbox"/> Eclampsia <input type="checkbox"/> Gestational hypertension <input type="checkbox"/> HELLP syndrome <input type="checkbox"/> Gestational diabetes <input type="checkbox"/> Preterm birth (<37 weeks) <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health symptoms or diagnosis (e.g., depression, anxiety, PTSD) <input type="checkbox"/> Something else: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Premature delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Stillbirth <input type="checkbox"/> Infant loss after delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Small for gestational age (SGA) <input type="checkbox"/> Fetal growth restriction (FGR) <input type="checkbox"/> Neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) stay <input type="checkbox"/> Something else: _____



## WHY TRACK MY BLOOD PRESSURE?

It is important to keep track of your blood pressure to help prevent medical issues due to high blood pressure in the weeks and months after delivery. Use your phone camera to scan the QR code to learn how to check your blood pressure on your own.



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## WHAT CAN A PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER DO FOR ME NOW?

A PCP is your “go-to” healthcare provider that monitors your overall health and prevents and treats any health conditions. They can also refer you to other specialists and help screen for heart disease and other health conditions. If you do not have a PCP or health insurance, ask your pregnancy care team for options for local healthcare. You may also check out [findhelp.org](https://findhelp.org) for other support resources.



### HOW DO I TALK TO MY CARE PROVIDERS?

Sometimes it can be hard to know what questions and concerns you might wish to discuss. Here are some ideas to help get the conversation started:

- Can we consider checking my blood counts, cholesterol, glucose, and/or kidney and liver function?
- I am feeling anxious and/or blue. Can you tell me more about mental health resources available to help me feel better?
- What kind of birth control methods could work well for me?
- Do you have any advice for me to safely become pregnant again?
- I am worried about my housing, income, food security, etc. Can you tell me more about what resources may be available to help me?
- Does it make sense for me to see a specialist, such as a cardiologist? If so, can you please connect me with them?

## 10 TIPS FOR YOUR LONG-TERM HEALTH<sup>2</sup>



Aim for blood pressure below 130/80.



Consider taking low-dose aspirin during your next pregnancy.



Download handout



Work with a provider to find a healthy weight for you.



Talk to a healthcare provider about choosing a safe and reliable birth control method.



Eat healthy – Include vegetables and whole grains. Watch your salt, fat, and sugar intake.

Download handout



Aim for quality and consistent sleep, at least 7-8 hours each night.



Go for regular check-ups with screenings for heart disease and diabetes.



Access support



Get moving for 20+ minutes each day.<sup>3</sup>



Live in a smoke-free environment.



Reach out to a healthcare provider about mental health support if you are feeling anxious or blue.

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Tracking your health and lifestyle goals can help you and your care team understand how you are recovering after a complicated pregnancy. Use this table to track your health goals beyond pregnancy and note any questions or concerns you may wish to discuss.



## Tracking My Recovery Goals Beyond Pregnancy

Time Since Delivery (Date)	Blood Pressure (mmHg)	Health Provider Contact	Sleep	Healthy Eating	Physical Activity	Mental Health	Questions or Concerns I Have
3 MONTHS: _____							
6 MONTHS: _____							
12 MONTHS: _____							
2 YEARS+: _____							



## WHAT FOLLOW-UP TESTING MIGHT I NEED?

Your provider can run routine tests to check how your body is recovering after pregnancy. They may test for diabetes, cholesterol, blood counts, and kidney and liver function. Use your phone camera to scan the QR code to learn more about what routine tests you may need after pregnancy.



1. Mehta PK, Minissian M, Bairey Merz CN. Adverse pregnancy outcomes and cardiovascular risk factor management. *Semin Perinatol*. 2015 Jun;39(4):268-75. doi: 10.1053/j.semperi.2015.05.005. Epub 2015 Jul 6. PMID: 26159741; PMCID: PMC4516636.
2. American Heart Association: Life's Essential 8. <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/lifes-essential-8>
3. World Health Organization: Every move counts toward better health. <https://www.who.int/news-room/item/25-11-2020-every-move-counts-towards-better-health-says-who>

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