

Your Postpartum Guide

Help is Here

**For You and
Your Baby**



maryland
physicians care
Medicaid with a Heart
mpcMedicaid.com



Congratulations!

Congratulations on the birth of your child! Bringing a new baby home is exciting and stressful. As a Maryland Physicians Care (MPC) member, you have access to personalized support, trusted medical care, and helpful benefits for both you and your baby.

This guide is designed to help you after the birth of your baby by providing useful information and resources to support you throughout your journey.

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Important To-Do's

NEXT STEPS FOR BABY

1. Take your baby to their first doctor visit within 7 days of birth.
2. Look for your baby's Social Security Card in the mail.
3. Sign your baby up for insurance coverage with Maryland Physicians Care within 45 days of delivery.

Parents should contact both Maryland Health Connection (MHC) and MPC.



MHC 855-642-8572

MPC 800-953-8854

Postpartum: What to Expect

Postpartum

Postpartum is the time after a baby is born. It usually lasts about 6 to 8 weeks. This time is important for both your body and your emotions as you recover from pregnancy and childbirth.

What Happens to Your Body

- Your uterus shrinks back to its normal size. This can cause cramps and bleeding.
- Hormones change quickly, which may cause mood swings, headaches, or sweating.
- Your breasts may feel full and sore as they start to make milk.
- If you had a C-section, the area may feel sore as it heals.
- You might feel tired from labor, birth, and caring for a newborn.

NEXT STEPS FOR MOM

- Get your postpartum checkup between 1 week and 12 weeks after your baby is born.
- **Don't skip your checkup.** You might think you don't need it because you feel fine. Or maybe it is hard to get to your doctor's office. This visit is very important. This visit helps your doctor know how you are doing physically, mentally, and emotionally.
- Postpartum checkups can help prevent future health problems.
- Get a \$50 gift card for going to your appointment between 1 and 12 weeks. Visit: marylandphysicianscare.com/hedis/



Postpartum: What to Expect

Your Feelings Matter Too

- Many new parents feel sad or emotional after giving birth. This is called the “**baby blues**.” It is normal and usually goes away in a week or two.
- If the sadness lasts longer or feels stronger, it could be **postpartum depression**. This is a real medical condition. It is important to talk to your doctor if you think you have this.
- **You are not alone, and it is not your fault. Many women feel this way.**

Everyone heals at their own pace. It is okay to ask for help and take time to recover. You are not alone!

If you are having a mental health crisis, please go to the nearest emergency room or call **9-8-8**.

- *Reach out and get help.* Support is available through Carelon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Visit: [Maryland Carelon](http://MarylandCarelon.org)

Call (800) 888-1965

- Learn more about mental health [here](#).



Taking Care of Yourself

- Go to your postpartum checkup. Your doctor will check how you are healing. Your doctor will answer any questions you may have.
- Try to rest, eat healthy foods, and ask for help when you need it.
- Talk to your doctor if anything doesn't feel right.



Breastfeeding Your Baby

Every baby and every parent is different. There is no one right way to feed your baby. Some people breastfeed. Some people give their baby formula. Some do both. What matters most is that your baby is fed.

Many doctors and health organizations recommend breastfeeding because it offers many health benefits.

Breastfeeding can help moms:

- Lower the risk of high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes
- Lower the risk of breast and ovarian cancer
- Help the body heal faster after giving birth

Breastfeeding can help babies:

- Get the right mix of nutrients to grow and develop
- Have fewer tummy problems like gas and constipation
- Fight off sicknesses like ear infections and colds
- Have a lower risk of **sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)**
- Grow stronger if they were born early (premature)

SIDS is the unexplained death of a baby that is usually younger than 1 year old.



Pacify
Breastfeeding Support

Pacify connects you with trusted doulas and lactation consultants, offering flexible support to guide you through every stage of pregnancy and postpartum. Available any time, day or night.

Get started: Download the **Pacify app** and use your MA number to sign up for FREE at pacify.com/enroll/mpc.

Safe Sleep

What Does a Safe Sleep Space Look Like for Baby?



A safe sleep space helps keep your baby safe during naps and bedtime. Here's what to do:

- **Put baby's crib in your room** for at least the first 6 months.
- **Use a firm mattress** with a tight-fitting sheet.
- **Take out pillows, blankets, toys, and bumpers**—they can be dangerous.
- **Dress baby in a sleep sack or wearable blanket** instead of using loose blankets.
- **Always place baby on their back** to sleep, not their side or stomach.
- **Keep baby's sleep space just for baby.** Don't sleep with baby in a bed or on a couch.
- **Keep baby's head and face uncovered** while sleeping.



Baby Milestones: First Year of Life

Your baby's first year is filled with important milestones. These milestones show how your baby is growing and learning. Every baby grows at their own pace. Some may reach certain milestones earlier or later than others. If you have concerns, it is always a good idea to talk with your baby's doctor.



1st Month

- Brings hands to mouth
- Developing reflexes, like shutting eyes at bright lights
- Looks at objects
- Turns head toward familiar voices

2nd Month

- Gurgles and coos
- Tries to follow movement with their eyes
- Holds head up and pushes up on their arms during tummy time

8th Month

- Rocks back and forth on their hands and knees
- Scoots along the floor
- Pulls up to standing position
- Drools more
- Continues to babble
- May show signs of stranger or separation anxiety



9th Month

- Crawls
- Plays peekaboo
- Holds small objects between fingers (pincer grasp)
- Points at things they want

7th Month

- Sits up without help for longer periods
- Responds to the word "no"
- Uses their hand like a rake to reach for things
- Responds to facial expressions
- Puts objects in their mouth
- Makes more noise and babbling

10th Month

- Walks while holding onto objects
- Bangs objects together
- Puts objects in a container and takes them out
- Feeds themselves with fingers
- Shakes head "no"
- Waves "bye-bye"



Vaccines Help Keep Your Baby Safe and Healthy

When babies stay healthy, they can grow, learn, and reach milestones. To keep your baby healthy, follow the vaccine schedule and visit cdc.gov/vaccines to learn about the shots your baby may need.

3rd Month

- Smiles when hearing your voice
- Holds head and chest up while on tummy
- Kicks legs
- Grasps for toys
- Brings hands to mouth with more precision
- Makes more varied sounds
- Recognizes familiar faces and objects
- Tries to imitate face expressions

4th Month

- Holds a rattle and shakes it
- Rolls from tummy to back
- Pushes legs down when held in a standing position



6th Month

- Sits up briefly without help
- Shows more emotion
- Tries to get things that may be out of reach
- Responds to their name



5th Month

- Rolls from tummy to back and then back to tummy
- Grabs feet
- Moves objects from one hand to the other
- Shows interest in food



12th Month

- Stands unsupported and taking a step or two
- Says one or two words
- Uses objects correctly, like a spoon
- Looks to the right object when asking questions like "Where's the dog?"



Your Maryland Physicians Care Benefits

You and your baby can get free healthcare through Maryland Physicians Care (MPC).

Benefits to Support Mom and Baby

Learn more about [pregnancy benefits](#) with MPC.

- **There are no co-pays when you see your doctor.**
- **Free breast pump:** Ask your OB to order one. If you need help getting a breast pump after talking to your OB, call MPC Care Management at 800-953-8854.
- **Home visiting services:** Provides support to pregnant people during pregnancy and childbirth, as well as to parents and children from birth through age three.
- **Doula support:** A trained **doula** can help during pregnancy, labor, and postpartum.
Doula - a trained professional who gives emotional, physical, and educational support to people during pregnancy, labor, and after birth.
- **Nutrition help:** Get healthy food and support through the **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program** or the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**.



[health.maryland.gov/phpa/wic/
pages/wic-apply.aspx](http://health.maryland.gov/phpa/wic/pages/wic-apply.aspx)



[dhs.maryland.gov/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program/
applying-for-the-food-supplement-program/](http://dhs.maryland.gov/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program/applying-for-the-food-supplement-program/)

MyVirtualMPC
by maryland physicians care



MyVirtualMPC

24/7 Support from anywhere. Use the [MyVirtualMPC.com](#) app to video chat, text, or share images with a doctor any time, day or night. Download the app from the App Store or Google Play. Bilingual help is available.

MPC Care Management Team

You can also call the MPC Care Management Team at **1-800-953-8854** (Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) for help with your benefits, finding a doctor, or making an appointment.



For information on additional Free Member Benefits, please visit [mpcMedicaid.com/freeprograms](#), or view your member handbook by visiting [mpcMedicaid.com/handbook](#).



Postpartum Benefits That Work for You.

Scan the QR code or visit

mpcMedicaid.com/benefits

Need Help?

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HealthChoice is a program of the Maryland Department of Health