



## Do these things to take care of yourself after your delivery:

- Rest as much as you can. Your normal energy will return in a few weeks.
- Eat healthy foods. Drink six to eight glasses of water a day. If you have prenatal vitamins, continue to take one a day.
- Continue to wear a good-fitting bra for about three weeks.
- Change your pad every time you go to the bathroom to prevent infection in the vaginal area. Wipe yourself from front to back every time you urinate or have a bowel movement. Wash your hands every time you change your pad or go to the bathroom.
- Do not take a tub bath for three weeks. Take showers only.
- Gradually resume your normal physical activity. Don't lift anything over 10 pounds. Don't drive a car for one week. Don't climb stairs for one week (if you have to climb steps, climb one step at a time).
- Avoid sexual intercourse for at least six weeks after delivery. Do not have intercourse if you are still bleeding vaginally. It is possible to become pregnant before you start having periods again, so talk to a doctor about ways to prevent another pregnancy.

- Get a medical examination four to six weeks after delivery. Your doctor or health department will keep your records confidential to protect you against any invasion of personal privacy.

### For information about:

- Family planning and contraception, call (800) 462-6122.
- Substance abuse counseling, call, toll free, (888) 729-8028.
- Domestic violence and abuse, call (800) 752-6200.

For information about health care specific to women, log on to:  
<http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/ach/mch.htm>

### Important!

If you left your baby at a safe place and have decided that you want your baby back, contact the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services at (800) 752-6200. If you do not contact the cabinet within 30 days after leaving your newborn, the cabinet will proceed with termination of parental rights and place your baby for adoption.

A copy of this material may be obtained from the following Web site:  
<http://chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dpp/KYSafeInfants.htm>

**For more information  
about the Safe Infants Act,  
call (800) 752-6200.**

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# You've Just Had a Baby...

# How to Keep Yourself Healthy!

Kentucky Cabinet  
for Health and Family Services



**Y**ou have made a courageous decision to leave your baby in the safe and good care of a hospital, police station, fire station or emergency medical services (EMS) provider. Your baby will be well taken care of and, eventually, be adopted into a safe, loving, permanent home. Now it's time to make sure that you are healthy.

**It's a good idea to see a doctor or go to the health department for an examination. For information about your local health department, call (800) 462-6122.**



## **What is normal after you've just had a baby?**

It takes your body about three to six weeks to return to its pre-pregnant state. You may experience several normal changes to your body during the first few days and weeks after delivery.

### **Vaginal bleeding**

This is blood coming from the uterus. It is a sign that the uterus is healing. At first, it is like a heavy period. The bleeding will start out as bright red, change to pink, and then change to a clear or yellow discharge. You should stop bleeding after three weeks. There should never be large blood clots or a bad odor.

**What to do:** Use sanitary pads only, no tampons. Do not take tub baths until the bleeding stops. Call a doctor if the bleeding becomes bright red again, if you pass large clots or if there is a bad odor.

### **Abdominal cramping**

Cramping is a sign that the uterus is returning to its normal size. These cramps are like mild menstrual cramps and will last a few days.

**What to do:** Take an over-the-counter pain reliever.

### **Breast engorgement**

Engorgement means the breasts are becoming full and very sore, and it is a sign that the breasts are filling with milk. This happens around the third day after delivery. Your breasts will become swollen, firm, tender and warm to the touch. Severe breast engorgement should not last more than 36 hours.

**What to do:** Wear a good-fitting support bra at all times and remove it only for showers. Apply an ice pack to the breasts for 20 minutes, four times a day. Avoid things that will stimulate the breasts. Avoid heat and hot showers.

### **Postpartum 'blues'**

Most women feel depressed for one to two weeks after delivery. You may feel angry, sad, tired and unable to sleep or eat during this time. These feelings are brought

on by the many changes that take place in your body and brain during and after delivery.

**What to do:** Know that this is normal and will go away. Find a family member or close friend to talk to about your feelings. Call a doctor if these feelings do not go away or if they intensify.



## **Call a doctor if you have any of these warning signs:**

- Heavy, bright red vaginal bleeding
- Foul-smelling vaginal discharge
- Dizziness or fainting
- Fever above 100.4 degrees F
- Pain around your vaginal area that does not go away or gets worse
- Pain or burning when you empty your bladder
- Pain or swelling in your legs
- Red streaks or painful new lumps in your breasts
- Cramps that are more painful than normal menstrual cramps
- Nausea and vomiting
- Chest pain or cough
- Feeling so sad that you aren't able to take care of yourself
- Feelings that you might hurt yourself