

SpeakUp™ for New Parents

Having a baby is a life-changing experience. It is important to be alert to signs and symptoms that are telling you to get medical help. Remember, if you or your advocate think something is wrong, speak up!

Know how to spot signs of high blood pressure and preeclampsia

Before, during, and after pregnancy you may have high blood pressure, also called hypertension. It can occur with preeclampsia, a serious condition that can affect your baby and lead to other problems. Contact your doctor if you experience:

- Swelling
- Headaches
- Pain in your lower back or shoulders
- Pain in your upper right side not related to contractions
- Nausea or feeling sick at your stomach
- Sudden weight gain of more than 3 to 5 pounds (2.3 kg) in a week or less
- Changes in eyesight (blurry vision, double vision, seeing "spots")
- Shortness of breath

TIPS

- Never miss a doctor visit.
- Be sure your doctor checks your urine for protein.
- Keep a record of your blood pressure so you will know if it changes.
- Count your baby's "kicks." After you eat a meal, lay down. Your baby should move about 10 times in an hour. If you do not feel your baby moving as normal, contact your doctor.



How to spot signs of heavy bleeding (hemorrhage)

Severe bleeding (hemorrhage) during or immediately after birth is warning sign. Call a nurse or ask for help if you think you are bleeding more than you should be. Warning signs of severe bleeding include:

- Soaking a pad in less than an hour
- Developing large, quarter-sized blood clots
- Dizziness after getting up from a chair or bed
- Increased heart rate
- Shortness of breath
- Weakness
- Not having to pee (urinate)
- Feeling cool or clammy
- Feeling thirsty

TIPS

Early in your pregnancy, let your doctor know if you have low iron (anemia), a history of bleeding, have received blood, or if you do not plan to receive blood during an emergency.



Be aware of the signs of infection

New moms are at risk for infection. Call your doctor if you experience any of these signs:

- Low-grade fever
- Chills
- Lower stomach (abdominal) pain
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness (fatigue)
- Foul-smelling discharge
- Warm, painful redness near surgical incision site
- Headaches
- Paleness
- Loss of appetite
- Fast heart rate

TIPS

- Wash your hands often.
- Watch to see that caregivers wash their hands.
- Ask visitors to wash their hands



Ask for help if you are feeling symptoms of depression

It's not unusual for new mothers to experience the baby blues. If you have any of the following signs for longer than two weeks after giving birth, you may need to seek help:

- Difficulty eating or sleeping
- Feelings of helplessness or sadness
- Not wanting to get out of bed
- Avoiding contact or bonding with your baby
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby

TIPS

- Know that you are not alone. Postpartum depression affects 10 to 20% of new mothers.
- Talking about these feelings with your doctor is important.
- There is help.



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