

Life After Postpartum Hemorrhage

Use this tool to learn what to expect and to identify topics you would like more information on.



**I Would Like
More Information
About This Topic**

Key Points about Postpartum Hemorrhage (PPH)

Losing a lot of blood quickly can cause a severe drop in your blood pressure. It may lead to shock and death if not treated.

Quickly finding and treating the cause of bleeding can often lead to a full recovery.

Postpartum hemorrhage can occur up to 12 weeks after birth. Talk to your healthcare provider about your risk and symptoms to watch for.

Physical Recovery

Losing a lot of blood can leave you feeling tired and weak. Your provider may want to do tests to find out how your body is coping with blood loss. This will help them decide what treatment to recommend.

When your body is having trouble coping with blood loss, it is normal to:

- Feel weak and get tired more easily
- Feel dizzy
- Be grumpy, cranky or angry
- Have headaches
- Look very pale
- Feel out of breath
- Have trouble focusing or concentrating
- Have ringing in ears

If you have any of the symptoms listed above, your healthcare provider may want you to take iron. If your iron levels are very low, you may be offered iron by injection, IV or even a blood transfusion.

Even if you are taking iron pills, your diet can be an important source of iron. Examples of iron-rich foods include: beef, shrimp, spinach, lentils, and almond butter.

Emotional Recovery

The “baby blues” and postpartum depression and anxiety can affect anyone. You may be more likely to have postpartum depression, anxiety or even post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after a postpartum hemorrhage.

Some symptoms of postpartum depression, anxiety and PTSD include:

- Feeling low (depressed mood) or angry most days
- Loss of interest in activities that you used to enjoy
- Having trouble concentrating
- Having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep
- Anxiety or excessive worry
- Loss of confidence or self esteem
- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Recurrent thoughts of suicide or death
- Reliving the event

If you have any of the symptoms listed above, contact your healthcare provider right away.

Whether you’ve had a hysterectomy or face a higher risk of postpartum hemorrhage with future pregnancies, there is often a grieving process to work through. Talk to your healthcare provider about support available.

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About This Topic**

**Call Your
Healthcare
Provider**

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| If you have heavy bleeding that soaks 1 maternity pad in an hour for 2 hours in a row. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you pass large blood clots. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you are breathing faster than normal, or your heart is beating faster than normal. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you are urinating less than usual, or not at all. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you feel dizzy. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you have questions or concerns about your condition or care. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Go to the
Emergency
Department**

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| If you have heavy bleeding that soaks 1 maternity pad in 15 minutes or less. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you are suddenly short of breath and feel lightheaded. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you have sudden chest pain. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Some women find it helpful to speak with their healthcare provider about the events surrounding their hemorrhage after they have had time to heal. Having this opportunity after you leave the hospital can help you fill in gaps of time you don't remember and allow for answers to questions that didn't come up until after you spent some time at home. If you would like an opportunity to meet with your healthcare provider, we encourage you to call his or her office to schedule an appointment when the time feels right to you. Be sure to let the scheduler or your provider's nurse know what information you would like to receive during the appointment, so that your healthcare provider can come prepared to answer your questions.

Your Steps to Success



BUILD

Build a team to support you that includes trusted providers, friends and family, and peer support.



LEARN

Learn what to expect and what you can do to advocate for your physical and emotional health and well-being.



SHARE

Share your informational and emotional support needs with your healthcare provider.



SUCCEED

Partner with your support team to make a plan for addressing your physical and emotional needs.

Visit www.alpqcc.org to learn about the Alabama Perinatal Quality Collaborative's Obstetric Hemorrhage Initiative and to find out how hospitals across the state are partnering together to help make Alabama the best place to give birth.



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