

Caring for yourself after childbirth

Maternity Service

Information for Patients

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Introduction

This leaflet will give you information about how to look after yourself following childbirth. It provides helpful advice and who to contact for help if you need it.

When and how to get urgent help

Non-urgent	Community Midwife (0116 2586111, then option 5) Health visitor or pharmacist
Urgent	GP, out of hours services or call 111 Leicester Maternity Services (0116 258 6111)
Life-threatening	Call 999 or go straight to A&E

Seek urgent medical help if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Sudden, very heavy or increased vaginal bleeding
- Leg swelling and tenderness or shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Persistent or bad headache
- Worsening reddening or swelling of your breasts for more than 24 hours
- Worsening pain in your tummy or vagina
- Vaginal discharge with a bad smell
- Fever, shivering and feeling unwell

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals.
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

Postnatal care

We will talk to you about your plan for postnatal care when you are discharged from the hospital. You will have care in the community by community midwives, maternity support workers and health visitors.

Please remember to:

- Register your baby's birth within 6 weeks. You will need to book an appointment online.
- Book an appointment to see your GP at 6 weeks with your baby. They will check you are recovering well.

Stiches after a vaginal birth

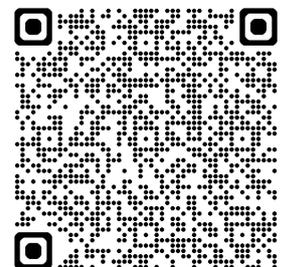
- Keep your stitches clean using water only. Have a shower at least once a day.
- You can take regular pain relief if you are feeling uncomfortable.
- To reduce the risk of infection, wash your hands before and after changing pads. Change your pads regularly.
- Eat a balanced diet and drink plenty of water to avoid constipation

Caesarean section stitches

- Most stitches are dissolvable so they will not need to be removed.
- Gently clean the wound with water every day and dry the area well.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothes and cotton underwear.
- Always wash your hands before and after touching your wound.

Pelvic floor exercises

You must do pelvic floor exercises no matter what type of birth you had. These exercises strengthen the muscles around your bladder, vagina and bottom. This stops you from accidentally peeing (urinary incontinence) and having your organs in your pelvic slip (prolapse). Use the QR code to find out more information about how to do pelvic floor exercises.



Having sex

It might be some time before you want to have sex again. There are no rules about when to start having sex again after giving birth. It all depends on what kind of birth you had, and how you feel emotionally and physically. You can talk to your midwife or GP if you need more information.

Contraception

You can get pregnant from 3 weeks after the birth of your baby. We advise you to start contraception as soon as possible (even if you are breastfeeding). You can get pregnant before your period starts again. Scan the QR code to find out more information about different types of contraception and which method would be most suitable for you. The hospital can arrange an appointment for you to have the implant or coil inserted. Please speak to your midwife.



Mental health support

If you are struggling or notice signs and symptoms of mental illness during pregnancy and after you've had your baby, please speak to a health professional to get support as soon as possible.

Around 1 in 4 women experience mental health problems in pregnancy and during the 24 months after giving birth. You are not alone. Difficulties during this time are very common.

Help is available if you need it. Getting support can help you to recover and help you, your child and your family to live a happy, healthy life together.

- feeling low, unhappy and tearful for much or all of the time
- irritability
- difficulty bonding with your baby
- overwhelming tiredness
- a loss of enjoyment or interest in anything
- not wanting to be around other people (isolating yourself)
- feeling very anxious and overwhelmed. This could cause physical symptoms like a racing pulse, sweating or thumping heart.
- feeling as though you want to avoid other people
- feeling hopeless, as though things are awful and will never get better
- thoughts about harming yourself or ending your life.

Signs and symptoms to look out for include:

If you notice your partner is struggling after having a baby, please speak to them and encourage them to get help. It can also be difficult for fathers and partners too. Help is out there if you need it.

Birth Reflections Service

The Birth Reflections Service is a listening and information giving service. It is led by midwives. It is open to all birthing people and their partners who have had maternity care at Leicester's Hospitals.

You can get in contact with the Birth Reflections Service by phone or email:

uhl-tr.birthreflectionsmailbox@nhs.net

Tel: 0787 647 6003 Please leave your full name and date of birth.

Common health problems after birth and what to do:

This QR code will take you to an article that lists the common health problems after birth. It will tell you about signs and symptoms to look out for, what they might mean and how to get help.



More information

- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247
- Your body after birth (NHS): www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/labour-and-birth/after-the-birth/your-body
- Leicester and Leicestershire mental health support: www.leicspart.nhs.uk/services/help-support-resources/?v=12891
- Caring for your emotional health after becoming a parent . Please find this on our patient information library website.
- You can use the Mum's mind text message service up to baby's first birthday to get free advice from a mental health professional Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm
Phone: 07507 330 026

Contact details

Community Midwife Office: 0116 258 4834

Leicester Maternity Services : 0116 258 6111



اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net