



Maternal Early Warning Signs: When to Seek Care After Having a Baby

Mom, your health matters! You are an essential part of your baby's health and wellbeing. After childbirth, your body continues to undergo important changes as it heals. Some serious medical conditions can develop **any time during the first 6 weeks after delivery**, even if your pregnancy and birth were uncomplicated. Early recognition and treatment of warning signs can prevent serious illness. Please review the symptoms below and seek care right away if they occur.

What is MEWS?

MEWS stands for Maternal Early Warning Signs. These are symptoms that may indicate a potentially serious condition after childbirth and should never be ignored. These can occur before hospital discharge, after returning home, and for up to **6 weeks postpartum**.

CALL 911 OR GO TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT IF YOU HAVE:

- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- Chest pain or pressure
- Seizure, collapse, or fainting
- Heavy vaginal bleeding (soaking more than one pad per hour)
- Severe headache with vision changes
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby

At the ER, ALWAYS tell them if you have been pregnant in the past year.

CALL YOUR PROVIDER FOR OTHER MATERNAL EARLY WARNING SIGNS:

- Heavy bleeding or large clots (golf-ball sized)
- Fever 100.4°F (38°C) or higher
- Foul-smelling vaginal discharge
- Redness, pain, or drainage from incision or tear
- Severe or persistent headache
- Shortness of breath or rapid heartbeat
- Leg pain, redness, warmth, or swelling
- Severe anxiety, sadness, or inability to cope

Trust your instincts. If something does not feel right, contact your healthcare provider or seek care right away. Taking care of yourself is a vital part of caring for your baby.