

POSTPARTUM VISITS:

After Baby Arrives, Care Still Matters

Supported by the South Dakota Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Needs Assessment, postpartum visits have been identified as an important focus area for improving maternal health outcomes. This work aligns with our state's federally funded maternal and child health program to prevent avoidable complications, reduce health gaps, and strengthen support for families across South Dakota.

"Women need better postpartum care and support, this in turn will have better health outcomes for mom and baby"

-Maternal Child Health Needs Assessment²

Why Postpartum Visits Matter

The weeks and months after birth are critical for a mother's health.

After a baby is born, a parent's body, emotions, and daily life change quickly. While pregnancy and delivery get a lot of attention, many serious health concerns can happen after birth, including mental health challenges. Postpartum visits help ensure mothers receive the care, support, and information they need to recover and thrive.

POSTPARTUM VISITS HELP:

- ✓ Check physical recovery and catch health concerns early
- ✓ Screen for postpartum depression and anxiety
- ✓ Talk about birth control and spacing future pregnancies
- ✓ Manage ongoing health conditions and medications
- ✓ Connect mothers to follow-up care and community resources

How We're Improving Access to Postpartum Care



Personalized Postpartum Support

Improve education, screening, and care supports to meet the needs of mothers and families.



Connecting Families to Care

Help families stay connected to postpartum visits, services, and community supports after birth.



Stronger Systems of Support

Build partnerships and strengthen community supports that improve maternal health outcomes.

Taking care of a postpartum mother is just as important as taking care of a newborn.

-South Dakota mother, PRAMS Report¹

Healthcare Providers, Community Partners, Families, & Support People

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS:

- Schedule postpartum visits before discharge
- Offer telehealth when appropriate
- Talk openly about mental health & recovery

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- Share postpartum education & resources
- Help families navigate appointments & services
- Promote awareness of warning signs

FAMILIES AND SUPPORT PEOPLE:

- Schedule & attend a postpartum visit within 12 weeks after birth
- Speak up about physical or emotional concerns
- Reach out for help. You don't have to do this alone.

Together, we can ensure every parent receives the care, support, and connection they deserve after birth.



Learn more about Women's Health at:
<https://doh.sd.gov/topics/mch/womens-health/>



POSTPARTUM CARE IN SD

What the Numbers Tell Us

Who's Getting Care?

9 out of 10 moms (89%) attend a postpartum visit¹

But not everyone has the same access:

Only 64% of American Indian mothers are getting postpartum care¹

Why Some Moms Miss Their Postpartum Visit

Top reasons mothers give¹:

	I felt fine	41%
	Too busy	40%
	No transportation	20%
	No child care	19%
	Didn't know I needed one	19%

What Happens at a Postpartum Visit?

Postpartum visits include more than a physical check-up. Mothers reported receiving care and guidance on¹:

Birth control options	93%
Signs of depression or anxiety	83%
Smoking & nicotine use	72%
Safety concerns	68%
When to get pregnant again	59%
Warning signs to watch for	53%
Blood pressure checks	52%
Healthy eating & exercise	49%
24% Depression/anxiety meds	
17% Diabetes testing	

Mental Health Matters

Postpartum visits can improve access to mental health screenings.

Nearly 3 in 10 mothers (29%) need mental health support after giving birth. Of those, **1 in 5** (22%) do not receive the support they need.¹

Some mothers reported not seeking postpartum mental health support because they felt their symptoms might not be taken seriously.

"I think they're just going to tell me that it's not that bad."

-South Dakota mother, PRAMS Report¹

Health risks do not end after delivery. Important physical and mental health concerns can emerge weeks or months later. Postpartum visits may be one of the most important opportunities to identify concerns early, provide support, and connect mothers to ongoing care.

The Critical Reality

59% of maternal deaths occur AFTER the first 6 weeks postpartum³

With most maternal deaths occurring after the first six weeks, continued attention to mental health, substance use, and other health concerns is essential throughout the postpartum period. Postpartum visits are a key opportunity to identify health concerns early, support mental health, and connect mothers to the resources and care they need.



Postpartum care saves lives.

Sources:

1. South Dakota Department of Health. (2023). PRAMS data report, 2023. <https://doh.sd.gov/health-data-reports/mch-data/prams/>
2. South Dakota Department of Health. (2025). MCH needs assessment report, 2025. https://doh.sd.gov/media/vijn4otj/mch-needs-assessment-report_2025.pdf
3. South Dakota Department of Health. (2025). Pregnancy-associated and infant deaths, 2015–2024. <https://doh.sd.gov/media/2x1fx1gp/pregnancy-associated-and-infant-mortality-report-2015-2024.pdf>