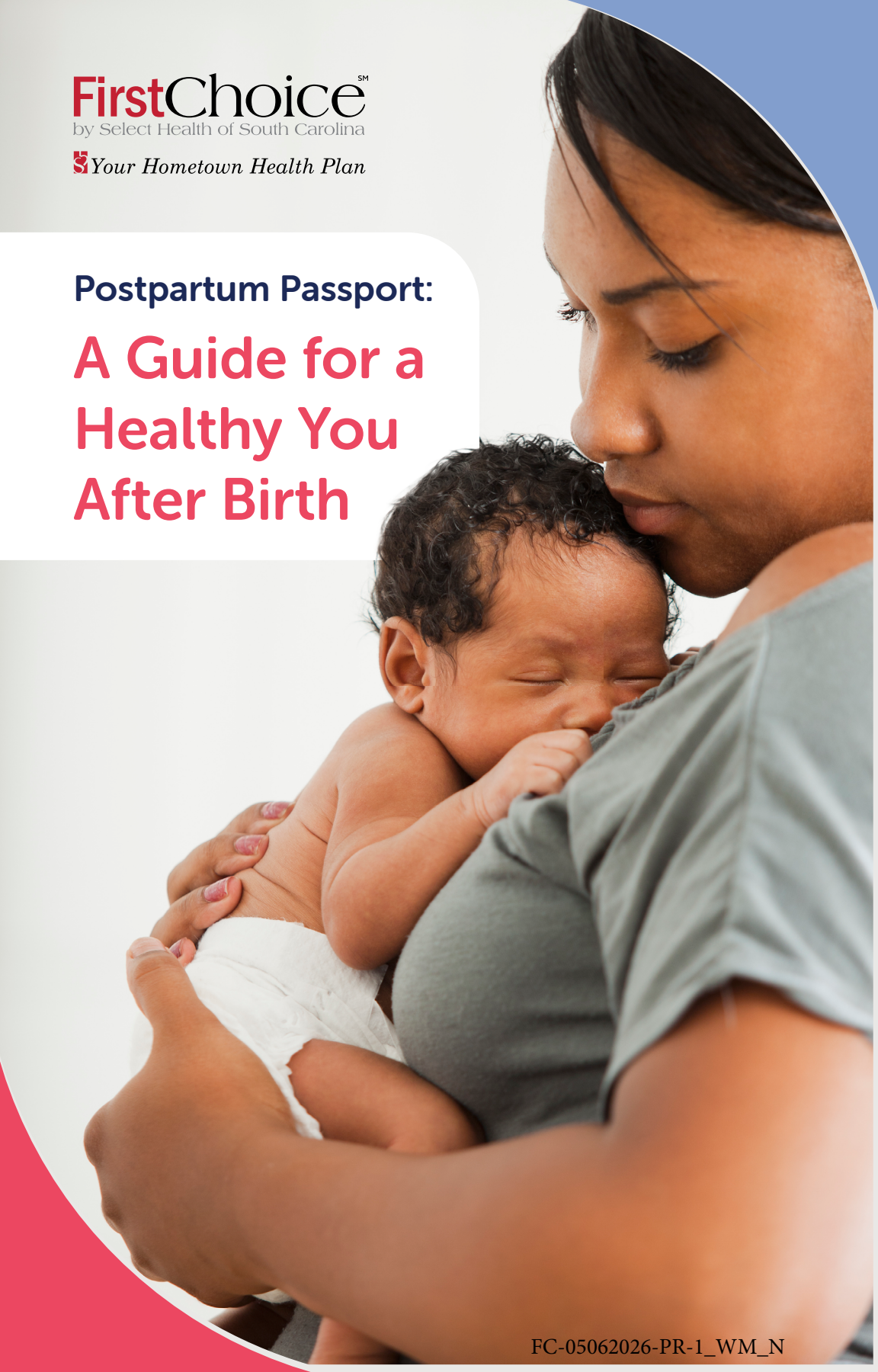
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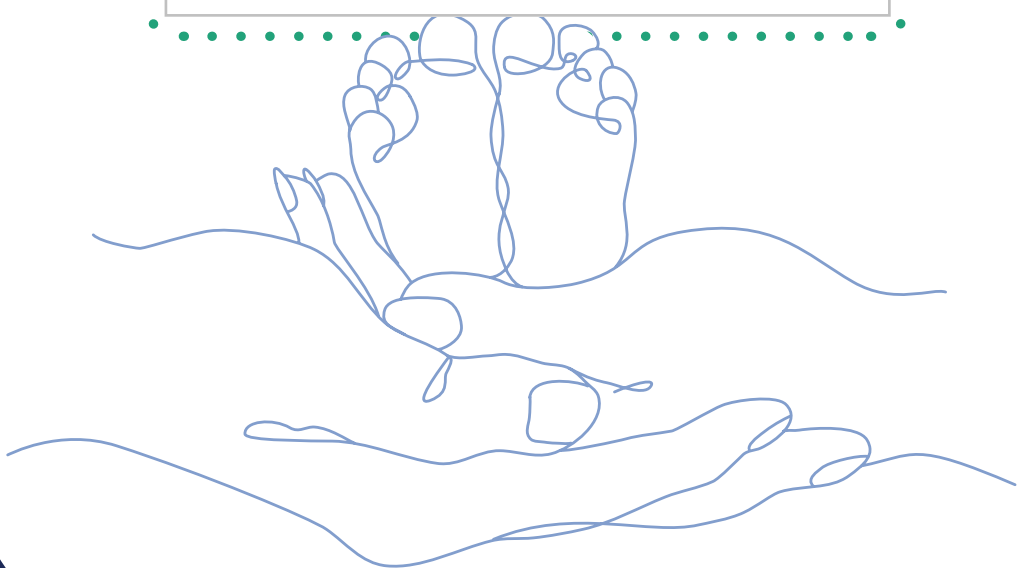
*Your Hometown Health Plan*

## Postpartum Passport:

# A Guide for a Healthy You After Birth



FC-05062026-PR-1_WM_N



# Congratulations,
## and welcome to parenthood!

**This passport will act as a guide to help you stay healthy after giving birth.**

**Your name:**

**Baby's name:**

**Baby's birthday:**

**Baby's birth weight:**

The information in this passport will help you learn more about this topic. It is not to take the place of your health care provider. If you have questions, talk with your health care provider. If you need to see your health care provider because of something you have read in this information, please contact your health care provider.



# My postpartum care team

**Keep the contact information for both your OB/GYN and your baby's pediatrician on hand so you can easily contact them with any questions or to schedule a follow-up appointment as needed.**

## My provider/clinic (OB/GYN)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

## Baby's provider/clinic (pediatrician)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

# My postpartum support system



## My lactation support person

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

## My behavioral health provider

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

## Family/friend support person

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

## Family/friend support person

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

## My doula

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____



# My postpartum journey at a glance

## What is postpartum?

Postpartum refers to the period after childbirth. Most often, the postpartum period is the first six to eight weeks after delivery, or until your body returns to its prepregnancy state.[1]

Your body goes through many physical and emotional changes during this time. You should contact your care team or support system if you have any questions or concerns during your postpartum journey.

**Here are some changes to be aware of:**

Physical changes:

- Perineum soreness
- Afterbirth pains
- Vaginal discharge
- Breast engorgement
- Nipple pain
- Swelling
- Hemorrhoids

Emotional changes:

- Feeling stressed and overwhelmed
- Baby blues and postpartum depression
- Relationship changes
- Return-to-work stress

**Scan this QR code to learn more.**

Source: March of Dimes

# Bright Start®

First Choice's Bright Start program is a safe place to ask questions and get the support you deserve throughout your pregnancy and after you give birth.

**Scan the QR code to learn more about Bright Start and your available resources.**

## Have questions?

Contact Bright Start by calling Member Services at **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586).** If you are having a medical emergency, call **911**.



### Did you know?

**It is important to raise any health concerns you have with your health care team.**

**Being an advocate for yourself is very important for the care and health of yourself and newborn.**







# Navigating big and little changes

## Be aware of urgent maternal warning signs and symptoms in the year after delivery.[4] You should call your OB/GYN or go to the emergency room immediately if you experience any of the following:

- Headache that won't go away or gets worse over time
- Dizziness or fainting
- Changes in your vision
- Fever of 100.4° F or higher
- Extreme swelling of your hands or face
- Thoughts about harming yourself or your baby
- Trouble breathing
- Chest pain or fast-beating heart
- Severe nausea and throwing up
- Severe belly pain that doesn't go away
- Abnormal/heavy vaginal bleeding or discharge
- Severe swelling, redness, or pain in your leg or arm
- Overwhelming tiredness

### Did you know?

**More than 80%** of pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S. are preventable.[2]

**Address your health concerns like your life depends on it — because it does!**

# Postpartum checkups

## What is a postpartum checkup, and why is it important?

A postpartum checkup is a **medical checkup you get after having a baby** to make sure you're recovering well from labor and birth. Even if you're feeling fine, it's important that you go to your postpartum checkup. This allows you to share any concerns you have with your care team and allows them to look for warning signs of serious health problems.[4] You should have your postpartum checkup no later than 12 weeks after giving birth.[5]

### Postpartum checkup schedule

_____

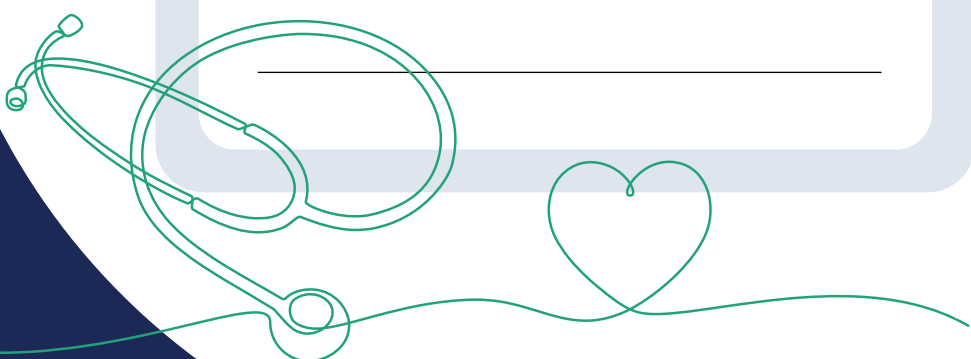
_____

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_____

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## What happens at a postpartum checkup?

Your OB/GYN:

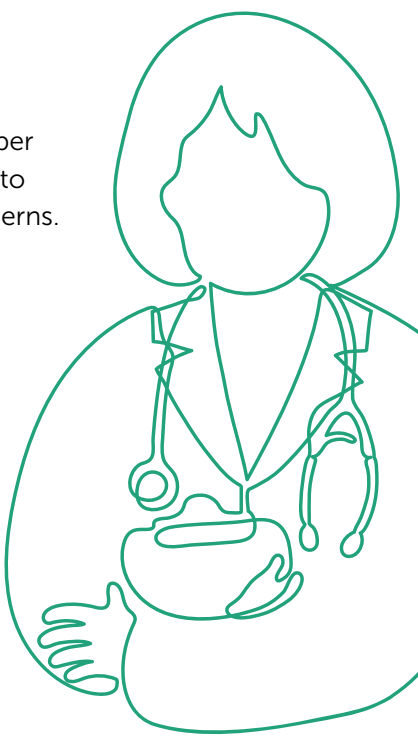
- Checks your blood pressure, weight, breasts, and belly
- Gives you a pelvic exam
- Checks on any health problems you may have had during pregnancy
- Makes sure your vaccinations are up to date

## Suggested topics to discuss with your OB/GYN at a postpartum checkup:

- Feelings about being a new parent (or a parent of multiple children)
- Your birthing experience and postpartum journey
- How to navigate health conditions you may have, such as high blood pressure or diabetes
- Questions about breastfeeding
- Family planning and contraception options

## Know your rights!

You can have your spouse, partner, or another member of your support team attend appointments with you to help advocate for your needs and address your concerns.



## Need a ride to your postpartum checkup?

Call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020** for assistance in scheduling your ride! Call as soon as you know you will need a ride, or at least 72 hours in advance when possible.

# Postpartum depression

Welcoming a baby into the world is an exciting and joyful time. However, being a parent can also be tiring and overwhelming. Baby blues are common, but some new moms may experience a more severe, **long-lasting form of depression** known as postpartum depression.

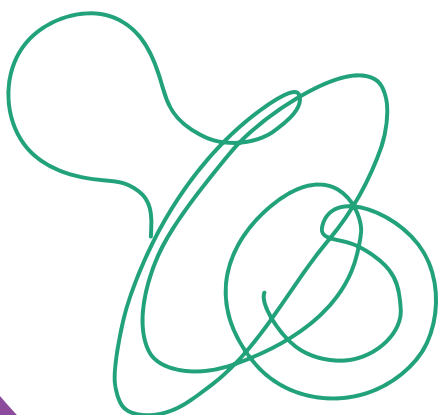
## Is it the baby blues, or is it postpartum depression?[6]

### Baby blues

- Starts within a few days of giving birth; goes away on its own within a couple of weeks
- Feeling restless or anxious
- Being impatient or grumpy
- Crying for no reason
- Feeling like "I'm not myself today."
- Finding it hard to concentrate
- Having changes in mood
- Feeling sad

### Postpartum depression

- Usually starts within one to three weeks of giving birth or any time up to one year; needs treatment to get better
- Feeling overpowering guilt, sadness, or panic
- Being afraid of staying alone
- Crying, feeling anxiety, or worrying a lot
- Feeling hopeless or like you're not good enough
- Having no energy and finding it hard to focus
- Losing or gaining weight, or having changes in appetite
- Having scary thoughts about yourself or your baby





## Did you know?

**One in eight women** experience feelings of postpartum depression.[7] It is common and treatable.

**If you feel like you might have postpartum depression, speak to your OB/GYN as soon as possible. They will help you get the treatment you need.**



# Healthy Rewards program

You can earn rewards by doing things that help you stay healthy. To begin earning rewards, all you have to do is complete the health screenings offered through our member incentive mailing. Then have your provider sign or stamp the form and return it to us in the envelope provided. **Earn a $25** gift card for going to your postpartum visit within 1 and 12 weeks after delivery.

Scan this QR code to learn more.

# Emotional support right at your fingertips

If you need immediate help, here are other resources that are available to you at no cost:

- National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: **988**
- Postpartum Support International: **1-800-944-4773**
- National Maternal Mental Health Hotline: **1-833-943-5746**

Your mental health matters, and we are here when you need us.

**Scan this QR code to learn more about our behavioral health services.**



# Advocating for your health



It is normal to feel overwhelmed and anxious at health care provider appointments, but there are ways to advocate for yourself.

## Tips for talking to a health care professional to make sure your voice is heard:

- Tell the health care professional what medications you are taking or have recently taken.
- Be sure to tell them you have been pregnant within the year.
- Take notes and ask more questions about anything you didn't understand.
- Example questions to ask:
  - What could these symptoms that I am having mean?
  - Is there a test I can have to rule out a serious problem?
  - At what point should I consider going to the emergency room or calling **911**?





## Examples of how to discuss your concerns:

- I have been having _____ (symptoms)
  that feel like _____ (Describe symptoms in detail.)
  _____
  _____
  and have been lasting _____ (number of hours/days).
- I know my body, and this doesn't feel normal.
- What should I expect from _____ (medication)?
- What should I expect my body to experience in the coming weeks/months?

**Trust yourself, and don't be afraid to speak up.**

# Breastfeeding

## Breastfeeding is one of the greatest things you can do for your baby! It allows you to bond while also passing nutrients to your baby.

Breastfeeding laws that apply in South Carolina:

- You are allowed to breastfeed anywhere.
- You have a right to a private breastfeeding/pumping space at work until your baby is one year old.
- The South Carolina Lactation Support Act requires employers to provide reasonable, often unpaid, private break time for employees to express milk.

Until they are six months old, babies can only drink breast milk or infant formula. At six months, you can begin introducing your baby to soft, puréed foods while you continue breastfeeding.[8] **For moms who can't breastfeed or who decide not to, infant formula is a healthy alternative.** While breastfeeding has many benefits for you and your baby, the most important thing is that your baby is fed and healthy.

Talk to your OB/GYN or call Member Services at **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)** for resources or assistance. They can help you get connected with breastfeeding and other postpartum resources, such as breast pumps, car seats, and diapers. They can also refer you to a lactation specialist.

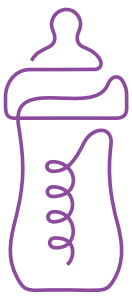
Breastfeeding will be a learning process for you and your baby. There is no right breastfeeding position. Before you begin, answer the following questions:

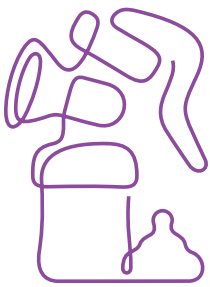
- Are you comfortable?
- Are your baby's head and body in a straight line?
- Are you holding your baby close to you, facing your breast?

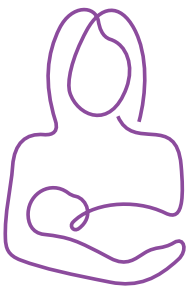
## Don't be afraid to ask your OB/GYN for help.

**Scan this QR code for different breastfeeding positions.**

Source: The Mayo Clinic













# Nutrition

Good nutrition is critical for new mothers and birthing persons. How you nourish your body is important for your health and, if you're breastfeeding, for your baby's growth and development.

## Here is a list of some of the best postpartum foods you should keep on your grocery list each week:

- Vegetables, including leafy greens, bell peppers, broccoli, avocados, carrots, kale, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, celery, cabbage, and carrots
- Fruits, like citrus, berries, mangoes, melons, apples, and bananas
- Whole grains, such as oats, quinoa, brown rice, and whole wheat bread
- Lean or low-fat protein, including fish, poultry, tofu, beans, seeds, nuts, lentils, edamame, and lean beef
- Low-fat or fat-free dairy, like yogurt, milk, cheese, and eggs

First Choice offers home-delivered meals and other nutrition programs to eligible members. Contact Member Services at **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)** for food assistance.

**Scan this QR code to learn more about postpartum nutrition.**

Source: What to Expect



# Returning to work

Returning to work can cause a lot of anxiety when you have an infant at home. Be sure to plan ahead to make the transition as smooth as possible.

## Things to consider:

- Child care arrangements
- Breastfeeding
- Your mental and physical health

If you are still breastfeeding, you have rights in the workplace. You have the right to take a reasonable unpaid break time to pump and have a private designated area, other than a bathroom, for you to do so.[9]

# Baby's developmental milestones

It takes just 12 short months to undergo this incredible transformation from newborn to toddler. Every baby develops at their own pace, but here are some tentative milestones you can watch out for in your baby's first amazing year.

Date of baby's first smile: _____

Date of baby's first laugh: _____

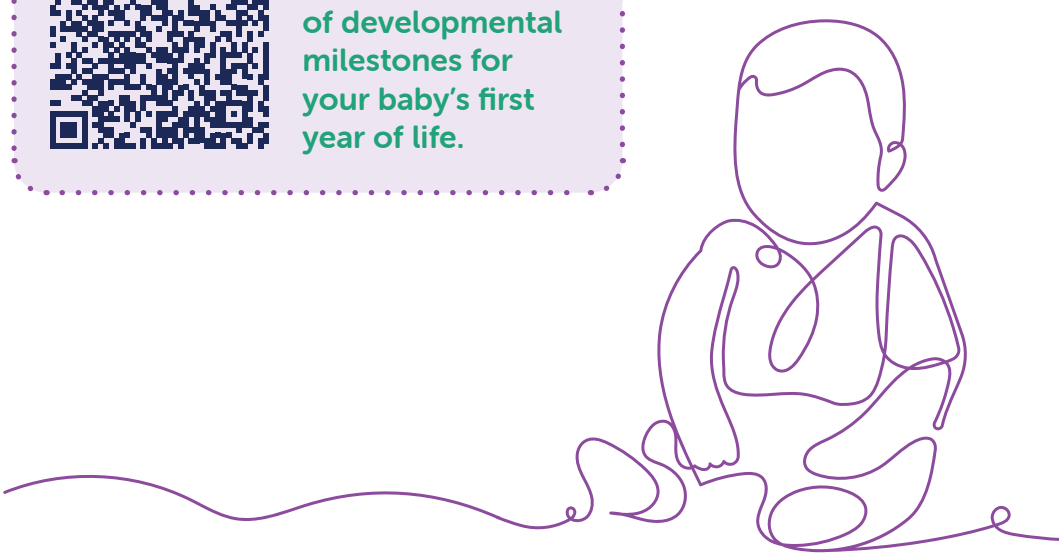
The first time baby crawls: _____

Baby's first word: _____

Date of baby's first steps: _____

**If you have concerns about any milestones, speak with your baby's pediatrician.**

**Scan this QR code for a breakdown of developmental milestones for your baby's first year of life.**



Source: March of Dimes

# Well-child visits

Your baby's checkup is sometimes called a well-child visit. These visits allow a pediatrician to make sure your baby is healthy and growing normally. The pediatrician will also give your baby any needed vaccinations and talk to you about how to keep your baby safe and healthy.

**During the first year, your baby should have an appointment with a pediatrician at the ages listed below.[10] Fill in the table with the dates of your baby's well-child visits.**

| Age to have appointment | Recommended vaccines[11] | Date completed |
|---|---|---|
| Birth | Hepatitis B (Hep B) | |
| 3 to 5 days after birth | | |
| 1 month old | | |
| 2 months old | DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis)<br>Hep B<br>Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b)<br>PCV (pneumococcal disease)<br>Rotavirus (given by mouth)<br>IPV (polio) | |
| 4 months old | DTaP<br>Hib<br>PCV<br>Rotavirus (given by mouth)<br>IPV | |

more than

2x

## Did you know?

Black infants in the U.S. are **more than twice as likely** as white infants to die before their first birthday.[12]

Taking your baby to all their well-child visits will help decrease that risk.

| Age to have appointment | Recommended vaccines[11] | Date completed |
|---|---|---|
| 6 months old | DTaP<br>Hep B<br>PCV<br>Hib, if needed<br>Rotavirus (given by mouth)<br>IPV<br>Influenza | |
| 9 months old | | |
| 12 months old | MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella); not before the first birthday<br>Hepatitis A (Hep A); not before the first birthday<br>Varicella (chickenpox); not before the first birthday<br>Hib<br>PCV | |



# Safe sleep

## What is safe sleep?

Safe sleep means putting your baby to sleep in ways that can help protect them from dangers such as choking and suffocation (not being able to breathe), and sudden infant death syndrome (also called SIDS). SIDS usually happens when a baby is sleeping.[13]

### Did you know?

more than **2x** as likely

In the U.S., Black and Native American/Alaska Native babies are **more than twice as likely** as white babies to die of SIDS.[14]

**Scan this QR code to learn about safe sleep for your baby.**

# Lead screening

Lead poisoning is a preventable health issue that can have severe and lasting effects, especially in children. Children can be poisoned by breathing air, drinking water, eating food, or swallowing or touching dirt that contains lead. That's why it is required that children in South Carolina **be tested for lead poisoning twice by the age of 3:** first between 9 and 12 months, and a second time at 24 months, and up to age 6 if not previously tested.[15]

**Early detection and intervention can make a significant difference in your child's future. Ask your pediatrician about lead screening at your baby's well-child visits.**

# Quick resources in an emergency



For immediate help: **911**

National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: **988**

Postpartum Support International: **1-800-944-4773**

National Maternal Mental Health Hotline: **1-833-943-5746**

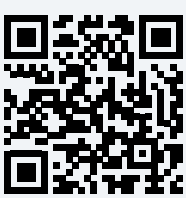
# First Choice resources

First Choice Member Services: **1-888-276-2020 (TTY 1-888-765-9586)**

First Choice 24/7 Nurse Line: **1-800-304-5436**

First Choice Transportation Service: **1-888-276-2020**,
8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday
8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday
(Weekend hours are only for members with pharmacy-related calls.)

## Postpartum Passport member experience



**Scan this QR code to complete the survey and give us your feedback.**



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