

C-Section Recovery Guide (Weeks 0–12)

Evidence-Informed Essentials for Comfort and Healing

1. Incision Care

Keep the incision clean and dry; gently pat dry after showers.

Watch for signs of infection: redness, swelling, warmth, discharge, or fever.

Avoid soaking baths or swimming until cleared by your provider.

Once the incision is fully closed, you may consider silicone scar strips or light scar massage if approved.

Wear soft, breathable fabrics to reduce irritation.

2. Rest + Gentle Movement

Try short, frequent walks around the house or yard to help circulation and prevent stiffness.

Avoid lifting anything heavier than your baby during early recovery.

Use a sheet looped around the bed or a belly band to help you sit up safely.

Rest when baby rests—even ten-minute resets help.

Accept help with meals, stairs, and housework.

3. Pain, Bowels & Comfort

Take pain medication as prescribed; staying ahead of pain helps healing.

Use stool softeners early on; gentle movement and hydration support digestion.

A Squatty Potty or low stool helps ease pressure on your abdomen.

Ice or heat packs can soothe incision or back pain.

A wedge pillow supports rest and makes getting up easier.



Mini Timeframe: What to expect

| Timeframe | Focus | Supportive Tips |
|------------|---|---|
| Days 1–7 | Rest, control pain, short walks, gentle meals | Protect incision; hydrate; manage constipation. |
| Weeks 2–4 | Gradually increase walking | No heavy lifting; maintain posture support. |
| Weeks 6–12 | Regain strength, reconnect with body | Ask about scar massage or pelvic floor therapy. |



Strength & Long-Term Care

4. Gentle Core + Pelvic Floor (When Cleared)

Begin with deep breathing and gentle pelvic floor awareness.

Avoid sit-ups, crunches, or high-intensity moves until cleared.

Pelvic health physical therapy can improve scar mobility, alignment, and comfort.

If something causes pain, pressure, or bulging — pause and ask your provider for guidance.

5. Nutrition & Hydration

Prioritize protein, fiber, and iron-rich foods to support tissue repair and blood health.

Drink plenty of water, especially if breastfeeding.

Small, frequent meals help maintain steady energy levels.

Keep healthy snacks within reach — yogurt, fruit, eggs, nuts, soups, oats.

6. When to Call Your Provider

Seek help if you notice any of the following:

Fever, chills, worsening pain, or incision redness/swelling

Drainage or foul odor from the incision

Heavy vaginal bleeding (soaking a pad in an hour), large clots, or foul odor

Severe headache, chest pain, shortness of breath, or leg pain/swelling

Nausea or vomiting that prevents eating or drinking

You simply feel something “isn’t right”

7. Comfort & Mindset

Healing from a C-section takes time — physically and emotionally.

Celebrate small progress: your first shower, first walk, first laugh without pain.

Be patient with energy levels; they fluctuate as your body rebuilds.

Ask for support when you need it — this is real healing, not recovery you rush through.

You are not behind. You are becoming stronger every day.

Gentle Reminder

Every recovery is different. This guide offers general support drawn from trusted postpartum care recommendations. Always follow the advice of your healthcare provider.

