

Hi there. Hello. Welcome to the first week of our four-week course on Women's Health After Motherhood. I'm Deirdre Daly, Assistant Professor in Midwifery in Trinity College Dublin. Before I started here, I was a practicing midwife, and I loved it. Listening to women, helping them become informed, and seeing the real and positive differences this made to women and couples' lives as they became parents was amazing. This course was designed to bring that positive difference to a global audience, to give you all the information you need and the ability to learn it at your own pace.

Working with Irish and Spanish mothers, women's health professionals, physiotherapists, midwives, and mental health experts, we've designed this wonderful course to help you support your health after giving birth. Before we get started, let me ask you, how are you? How you feeling?

When was the last time anyone else asked you how are you? When was the last time you asked yourself, how am I really? We understand that many women worry about caring for their baby. But we also know that women's health after childbirth is often neglected in many countries around the world.

Postnatal care all too often focuses on the baby's well-being, not the woman's. So this course is designed with and for women. It's all about asking women, how are you?

In the last few years, the World Health Organisation has changed its language around motherhood. And now there's a great focus on positive experiences during pregnancy, birth, and motherhood. There's also a stronger focus in identifying and treating non-life-threatening health problems or morbidities. These are the type of health problems, like leaking urine, et cetera. They're common. They're not normal. But when they're not treated, they can leave women miserable.

Aspects of women's health, physical, emotional, sexual, well-being, and relationships, they're all connected. But to make this course accessible, we break down these topics over the coming four weeks. In week one, we look at myths around motherhood and how to be active after pregnancy.

Week two, we'll address incontinence, a really common health problem for many women. Week three, we'll talk about your mental health after giving birth. And in the final week four, we look at sexual health, intimate relations, and social relationships.

So welcome to week one. This week is broken down into two parts. The first part will explore some of the common myths around women's health after giving birth. What stories have you heard from others? And how can you tell what is and isn't based on research or evidence?

We start by looking at what women in the MAMMI Study told us they wish they had known sooner and some of the fears and worries they told us about. Afterwards you'll get a chance to share your own voice in the comments section and read what other women have experienced. Once we've done that, the second part of this week will focus on your physical health, being active after motherhood. We look at what is and isn't normal and how to look after yourself and be healthy.

What motivates you to be active? What challenges do you face when it comes to exercise? And importantly, how can you overcome those barriers to being active?

In the next hour, you'll see short videos from women's health experts, listen to women's voices, read short articles, and even take some quizzes. Our real goal with this course is for each and every one of you to learn from us and help you help yourself thrive. To do this, you and all the mothers around the world need to be able to find time and space for your own health. When you put your health and well-being first, chances are that your baby's, your children's, and your family will be healthy too.