

“ In this exercise, we would like you to reflect on what you know about women's health after giving birth.

We will show you some statements and ask you to **click on** what you think are the **right answers**. It takes about **5 minutes** and there are **10 statements**.

In some of the answers, you will see references to **research papers**. We have included links to these at the end of the exercise.

Click on the start button below to begin.



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1 → Your body will be ‘back to normal’ six to eight weeks after giving birth.



“ **Correct answer: False**

While you should no longer have vaginal bleeding (unless your periods have returned) or be experiencing pain by 6 weeks postpartum, this doesn't mean your body will feel exactly how it did before you became pregnant.

Research suggests that it can take **up to six months** for all your body's changes to go back to their pre-pregnant state (Romano et al, 2010).

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2 → You should get back to exercise quickly after giving birth

TRUE

A True

~~FALSE~~

B False

“ **Correct answer: False**

Returning to vigorous exercise too soon after giving birth can actually **increase your risk of injury** as your ligaments are still affected by hormones that prepared your body for birth (Dragoo et al, 2011).

Your physical recovery following birth **depends on how you gave birth**, and if you had an episiotomy or tear to the perineum and required stitches, or if you had a caesarean section, which is major surgery, your recovery time will be longer.

It is good to have a **period of rest after birth**, to give your body a chance to recover. You can carry on with day to day activities, but **return to exercise gradually** and build up to your old routine (Hruska, 2018).

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3 → Which of the following increases your risk of developing postpartum depression?

A Your mother experienced postpartum depression

B You experienced anxiety or depression before or during pregnancy

C Not having much social support

D All of these

“ **Correct answer: D - All of these**

Several factors can increase a woman’s risk of developing postpartum depression. For example, experiencing depression or anxiety during pregnancy or having a previous history with depression increases your risk.

Experiencing **stressful life events** during pregnancy or soon after giving birth, having **relationship difficulties** or not having many family or friends around to support you also make you more vulnerable to developing depression (Norhayatia et al, 2015; Fiala et al, 2017).

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4 → Signs and symptoms of postpartum depression

A Occur in the first few days after birth

B Develop by the third month after birth

C Can develop even a year after giving birth

D Only develops in first-time mothers

“ **Correct answer: C - Can develop even a year after giving birth**

While signs of postpartum depression most often present in the first few weeks after giving birth, some women can develop depression even **a year after giving birth.**

Postnatal depression can affect any woman in any pregnancy or postpartum.

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5 → How many women do you think experience DEPRESSION three months after giving birth

A One in two

B One in six

C One in twelve

D One in twenty

“ **Correct answer: B - One in six women**

The MAMMI study found that as many as **one in six women** reported experiencing symptoms of postnatal depression three months after giving birth to their first child (Carroll et al, 2015; Woolhouse et al, 2014).

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6 → How many women do you think are experiencing ANXIETY three months after giving birth

A One in two

B One in six

C One in twelve

D One in twenty

“ **Correct answer: C - One in twelve women**

The MAMMI study found that in first times mothers; **one in twelve women** reported experiencing postnatal anxiety three months after giving birth to their first child (Rafferty, 2019; Rafferty et al, 2019; Dennis et al, 2017).

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7 → What percentage of women, do you think, will experience pain during sexual intercourse during the first three months after birth?

A Around 10%

B Around 30%

C Around 50%

D Around 80%

“ **Correct answer: C - Around 50%**

Data from the MAMMI study shows that 54% of first-time mothers, that's more than one in every two women, reported pain during sexual intercourse during the first three months after birth (O'Malley et al, 2018) .

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8 → Most women aren't happy with their sex lives after they have had a child

<p>TRUE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> True</p>	<p>FALSE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> False</p>
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“ **Correct answer: False**

Two-thirds (68%) of the women who took part in the MAMMI study said that they were satisfied with their overall sexual life 12 months after birth, even though two in five women said they experienced a loss of interest in sex (O'Malley et al, 2018; O'Malley et al, 2019).

Remember there is no “right” amount of sex you should be having. What works in someone else's life may not be right for you.

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9 → How many women experienced leaking faeces (stools) three months after giving birth?

A None

B One in twelve

C One in twenty

D One in a hundred

“ **Correct answer: B - One in twelve**

Women who took part in the MAMMI study told us that, at three months after giving birth, **one in twelve were leaking faeces** (Carroll et al, 2016; Eason et al, 2002).

Leaking faeces after giving birth is common, but it is not normal and can be treated.

If you are leaking faeces, please talk to your healthcare professional or women's health physiotherapist.

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10 → If you have a caesarean section, you can still leak faeces after the birth

TRUE

A True

FALSE

B False

“ **Correct answer: True**

Women who have a caesarean birth can still experience leaking faeces. There is no clear evidence that having a caesarean will prevent you from leaking faeces after the birth (Nelson et al., 2010; Gartland et al., 2015).

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“ Thank you for taking part in this maternal myths exercise.

Here you can find some more information about **the research** that these statements came from.

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: Frequently asked questions about labor, deliver and post partum care <https://www.acog.org/-/media/For-Patients/faq091.pdf?dmc=1&ts=20160523T1009470486>

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