

After you've delivered . . .

Congratulations on your new arrival! An exciting new chapter in your life has begun!

While four out of five women note improvement in their headache pattern by the third trimester, headaches usually return after delivery. Headaches may return after your baby is born because of changes in:

- Hormone levels;
- Your sleep pattern;
- Stress associated with the new arrival and changing routines.

All of these factors can contribute to the return of the headaches.

After your baby is born, your headaches can affect both you and your ability to interact with your baby—so there are now even more reasons to effectively control your headaches. Medications you use for your headaches can also affect the baby if you are nursing, so talk to your healthcare provider about which medications can be safely used when nursing. Fortunately, many effective headache treatments can be used while breastfeeding.

The decision to breastfeed your infant is an important one. There are many health benefits for the breastfed newborn, as well as the breastfeeding mother:

- Benefits for the baby from breastfeeding:
 - Ideal nutrition;
 - Gives baby important hormones and immune factors;
 - Reduces infant infections;
 - Promotes bonding with mom.
- Benefits for the mother from breastfeeding:
 - Delays return of headaches;
 - Helps improve needed weight loss after delivery;
 - Reduces the risk for developing breast and ovarian cancer;
 - Reduces the risk for developing rheumatoid arthritis;
 - Promotes bonding with baby.

If you decide to nurse your baby:

- Arrange an office visit with your healthcare provider soon after delivery to develop a safe, effective treatment plan.
- Review non-drug approaches to treat headaches.
- Keep track of your headaches using a headache diary.
- Learn how and when to safely store breast milk in case you need to supplement feedings.
- Talk to your provider about safe and effective contraceptive methods that can be used when breastfeeding.