Is vaginal bleeding normal after birth?
Yes, vaginal bleeding (also called lochia) is completely normal after giving birth. Bleeding occurs if you have a vaginal birth or a caesarean section birth.

What is normal blood loss after birth?
In the first 1–2 days after your baby is born, bleeding is usually bright red in colour. On the first day you may soak up to one sanitary pad each hour. Over the next several days, the bleeding will slowly get less each day and change colour from bright red to a pink or brown colour and then to a creamy colour. Most women will stop bleeding between four and six weeks after giving birth. Some women may bleed for longer or shorter than this.

You may have heavier bleeding:
• in the morning when you get up
• after breastfeeding
• after exercising

Are blood clots normal?
A blood clot is a mass of blood that sticks together and forms a jelly-like substance. Passing blood clots is common after having a baby. In the first 24 hours after birth, clots may be golf-ball sized or larger. The clots should get smaller and happen less often as your bleeding gets less over the first few days.

What causes bleeding?
When you were pregnant, blood vessels ran between your uterus and placenta. When the placenta comes away from the wall of the uterus (after your baby is born), there are open blood vessels that bleed. Your uterus contracts to squeeze these bleeding vessels shut. Over 7–10 days your uterus continues to contract, begins to heal and the bleeding gets less.
When should you seek help?
If you gave birth more than 24 hours ago, contact your health care provider if:

- You are still soaking more than one pad every 1–2 hours
- The amount of bleeding suddenly increases or you pass large clots
- The blood suddenly changes to a bright red colour
- You feel dizzy, weak, sweaty or have trouble breathing
- Your vaginal loss smells, or you have a high temperature
- You are worried that your bleeding is not normal

Comfort, support and information

13HEALTH (13 432584) is a phone line that provides health information, referral and services to the public.

Pregnancy, Birth & Baby Helpline (1800 882 436 - free call) offers free, confidential, professional information and counselling for women, their partners and families relating to issues of conception, pregnancy, birthing and postnatal care


Lifeline (13 11 14) Lifeline offers a telephone crisis support service to anyone

www.lifeline.org.au