## OSCE checklist for postnatal assessment

An OSCE checklist for postnatal assessment covers the mother and the baby: how she feels, her observations, breasts, uterus, bleeding, perineum or wound, bladder, bowels, legs and mood, then the baby's feeding, colour, cord and weight.

# OSCE checklist for postnatal assessment: steps to practise

1. Wash or rub your hands. Introduce yourself, confirm identity, explain and gain consent. Ensure privacy.
2. Review the notes: type of birth, any problems, feeding plan and previous checks.
3. Ask how she is: pain, bleeding, fever, headache, breathlessness, sleep and how she feels emotionally.
4. Take her temperature, pulse, breathing rate and blood pressure, and the level of alertness.
5. Ask about and check the breasts, and observe a feed if possible.
6. Check the uterus by palpation, asking her to empty her bladder first.
7. Ask about the amount, colour and smell of the bleeding, and check any pads if appropriate.
8. Check the perineum or caesarean wound, and the passage of urine and bowels.
9. Check the legs for pain, swelling or redness.
10. Check the baby: colour, tone, feeding, cord, temperature, nappies and weight as your policy requires.
11. Explain findings and warning signs, and agree the next contact.
12. Record your findings.

# What candidates commonly forget

- Mood and mental health questions.
- Asking about passing urine.
- Fever, smell or heavy bleeding as warning signs.
- Leg checks for clots.

- Looking at the baby and feeding, not only the mother.

## Local policy comes first

This is our own practice checklist. Your college, hospital or country may do some steps differently. Where local policy and this list disagree, follow local policy. Schedules, visit times and what a postnatal check includes differ by country and service. Follow your local pathway. You can practise with an AI patient, and try one station free with no sign-up. See also the general OSCE nursing checklist.

## Common questions

### What do I check in a postnatal assessment?

The mother's observations, breasts, uterus, bleeding, perineum or wound, bladder, bowels, legs and mood, and the baby's feeding and condition.

### Why ask about mood?

Low mood and anxiety are common and treatable, and finding them early helps.

### What are the warning signs I should mention?

Heavy bleeding, fever, a bad smell, severe pain, breathlessness, or a painful swollen leg. Use your local list.

## Sources


- NICE NG194: Postnatal care
- WHO recommendations on maternal and newborn care for a positive postnatal experience


Checked 2026-11-13. Fees and rules change, so confirm them with the regulator before you book.