

A RECIPE FOR POSTPARTUM RECOVERY SUCCESS

- The First Forty Days: The Essential Art of Nourishing the New Mother by Heng Ou
- Strong As a Mother: How to Stay Healthy, Happy, and (Most Importantly) Sane from Pregnancy to Parenthood: The Only Guide to Taking Care of YOU! by Kate Rope
- How Not to Hate Your Husband After Kids by Jancee Dunn
- And Baby Makes Three by John Gottman

Writing a postpartum plan

A growing number of mamas-to-be are choosing to write a postpartum plan to indicate their strategies and preferences for everything from receiving visitors to preparing meals.

The plan can be a reference that's only intended for your immediate family's eyes, so you can glance at it when needed and let your family and friends know verbally what your preferences are. For example, "We read that it's a good idea to keep visits under 30 minutes in the first two weeks, so you're welcome to come by between 2:30 and 3:00pm."

Another option is to address your family, friends and carers directly in your plan and have them read it. This type of plan might include an introduction that says, "We have taken a lot of time to think about our family's needs in the postpartum period and we're so grateful for your support during this time. If you have any questions regarding our plan, please feel free to ask." All the points would then be written using considerate wording to avoid ruffling your loved ones' feathers. There are numerous printable postpartum plans online, so have a look around until you find one that feels right.

Topics to cover in your post-partum plan

Here are some examples of sections to include in your plan, but feel free to add or remove sections depending on your family's needs.

Baby care in hospital

- Do we want to follow the standard protocol for vaccinations?
- Will our baby be breastfed or formula fed?

- Will we feed on demand or on schedule?
- Will we use pacifiers?
- Do we want frequent skin-to-skin contact?
- Do we want to receive instructions on breastfeeding, diapering, bathing and swaddling?
- Do we want to save the placenta and what do we plan to do with it?

Visitors

- Are visitors allowed to come to the hospital? Everyone or just close family?
- How many days/weeks after we take the baby home do we want to start receiving visitors?
- What are the best times of day for them to visit and what's the maximum amount of time they should stay?
- What are some tasks we could ask visitors to help with and should we consider posting a list on the fridge as a reference?
- Should we ask visitors to use hand soap or hand sanitizer when they enter the house?
- Should we ask visitors to avoid wearing perfume?
- Will we allow visitors to hold the baby?
- Should we encourage out-of-town visitors to stay with us or in a hotel?

If Mom is Breastfeeding

- Should we advise visitors that Mom may need to breastfeed at any time during their visit and that she may not be covered up?
- Should we suggest things visitors can do to help Mom while she's breastfeeding, such as bring her a glass of water or change the baby's diaper?

If Mom is Napping

- Should we ask visitors to help Mom get some rest by taking care of the baby if they can, but waking her if the baby needs to eat?
- Should we ask visitors to keep the house quiet during this time?
- Should we suggest other things visitors can do to help while Mom sleeps?

Self-care

- How many hours of sleep does each family member need to function normally and how will we go about trying to achieve that?

- What essential supplies will Mom need in the first few weeks: maternity pads, several pairs of underwear, comfortable pajamas, water bottles around the house, healthy snacks, magazines, etc.?
- How do we plan to keep Mom well-nourished and hydrated?
- What types of music and TV shows will we find uplifting?
- What other self-care practices does each family member need to follow to stay positive and happy: bath, meditation, reading, massage, walks, etc.?
- What are each partner's expectations of the other during this period and how do we plan to communicate our needs to each other effectively?

Meal preparation and chores

- How do we plan to feed the family nutritiously in the first couple of months: previously prepared freezer meals, [healthy meal services](#) etc.?
- Who will do each household chore and when? (create a detailed list)
- Who will look after our other children's needs: feeding, bathing, school pick-ups and drop-offs, etc.?
- Who will keep track of our postpartum appointments and all our other engagements?
- Who will look after our pets?
- How will we ensure our children and pets accept the new baby?

List of important contacts

- Who are our postpartum care providers and what's their contact info?
- Which family members and friends can we rely on for help and what's their contact info?
- Who are our postpartum mental health supporters? OB/GYN? Primary Care? Maternal Mental Health Counselor/Therapist? Support groups? Online (eg. Postpartum Support International)?

- **List of signs to look out for that may require medical or mental health attention**

- **Mood:** anger, anxiety, guilt, hopelessness, loss of interest or pleasure in activities, mood swings, or panic attack
- **Behavioral:** crying, irritability, or restlessness
- **Whole body:** fatigue or loss of appetite
- **Weight:** weight gain or weight loss
- **Cognitive:** lack of concentration or unwanted thoughts
- **Psychological:** depression or fear

- Insomnia (trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, sleeping all of the time or repeatedly going over thoughts, some of which feel out of touch with reality or scary)

In A Mental Health Emergency

NATIONAL CRISIS TEXT LINE:

- Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the USA, anytime, about any type of crisis.

National Suicide Prevention Hotline and Website

- 1-800-273-8255
- www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org Call for yourself or someone you care about; free and confidential; network of more than 140 crisis centers nationwide; available 24/7

Call the PSI HelpLine at 1-800-944-4773(4PPD)

Text Support: send a message to our Helpline at 503-894-9453

- The PSI HelpLine is a toll-free telephone number anyone can call to get basic information, support, and resources.
- Dial extension 1 for Spanish and extension 2 for English.
- The HelpLine messages are returned every day of the week.
- You are welcome to leave a confidential message any time, and one of the HelpLine volunteers will return your call as soon as possible. If you are not able to talk when the volunteer calls you, you can arrange another time to connect. The volunteer will give you information, encouragement, and names of resources near you.

911 for emergency response by Fire, Police or EMS

Better-than-Baby Registry

Got everything? Nothing left for a registry? Give your friends and family a chance to chip in.

Meal-delivery: A delicious home-cooked meal from a loved one? Yes, please! (Or even a meal-delivery service).

Chores: Housecleaning and lawn maintenance are usually the last things any new parent wants to deal with. Ask someone to help keep things tidy or register for \$\$ towards a cleaning/lawn service.

Preloved Baby books and music: It's never too early to start reading with baby. Books are a great way to bond with baby.

Used Baby Clothes or Accessories: Pre-loved clothes from a loved one's child makes a great eco-friendly gift.

Babysitting: Every new parent could use a nap, a hot shower or even a date night! Ask a loved one to care for your baby while you take a break (or register for a babysitting service).

Extras: It takes a village to raise a child, give your loved ones the chance to lend a helping hand. Get as creative as you'd like, this blank coupon is your chance to ask for what you really need. This could be \$\$\$- towards a night nurse, birth or postpartum doula time and transportation- to take older siblings for play dates, to/from school or activities while mom and new baby bond errands- running the dry cleaners, the grocery store, the pharmacy...

A prepared family is a happy family. Enjoy this special time!