

# Postpartum Support Guide

As you prepare to welcome your baby into the world, it is important to think about what comes after the birth – this is called the postpartum period. This is a time of changes and new beginnings for you and your family. A postpartum guide may help you and your family plan ahead for the weeks and months following birth.

You may find it helpful to create a postpartum guide that matches your values and your individual situations. You can revisit this plan if something is not working for you and change or add to it.



## Supports

Your health and well-being throughout the postpartum journey is closely linked to a circle of community care. If you have people you already consider to be part of your circle/community you can list them here.

These are ways/places that I can build some connections and support: (e.g. List local mom/parenting groups)

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These people can help me with:

Holding my baby: \_\_\_\_\_

Watching my baby while I nap during the day: \_\_\_\_\_

Helping me overnight with my baby: \_\_\_\_\_

Caring for siblings: \_\_\_\_\_

Meal prep and dishes: \_\_\_\_\_

Laundry, cleaning, and other household chores: \_\_\_\_\_

Walking the dog and caring for other pets: \_\_\_\_\_

Errands: \_\_\_\_\_

This is my grocery list of common items we may need (e.g. milk, bread, fruit) if friends/family offer to shop for us (can prepare a separate list and have ready to give out!):

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I have experienced a complicated relationship with food and/or substances in the past, and this is what I do to help myself when feelings resurface and who I can reach out to:

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If I have concerns or questions about feeding my baby, this is where I can get help: (e.g. Local public health office, la leche league, lactation consultant, care provider, etc)

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## Safety

All babies cry – this is normal and it’s how they communicate. However, for the safety and well-being of both the baby and the caregiver, it’s okay to place the baby in a safe environment, such as a crib, and take a short break when needed. This allows parents to collect themselves, reduce stress, and ensure they can respond to their baby with patience and care. To learn more visit Prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome BC [www.dontshake.ca](http://www.dontshake.ca)

This is a safe place I can put my baby if I am feeling overwhelmed:

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This is where I plan for me and my baby to sleep:

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If our plan above for sleep is not working we will try:

(Refer to Safer Sleep for my Baby) [www.healthlinkbc.ca/sites/default/files/safer-sleep-for-my-baby.pdf](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/sites/default/files/safer-sleep-for-my-baby.pdf)

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If my baby doesn't want to be put down, a baby carrier (wrap, sling, structured and traditional carriers) may be helpful. This is how I will safely use my carrier:

- T:** Tight and close to my or my partner's/caregiver's body
- I:** Infant's face should be in view at all times with no fabric on their face or head
- C:** Close enough to kiss
- K:** Keep infant's chin off my chest
- S:** Supported back

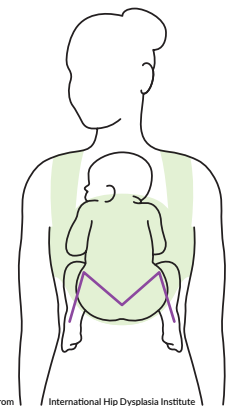


Image adapted from International Hip Dysplasia Institute

Create a safety plan to ensure the well-being of both you and your baby if you or your partner are planning to drink alcohol or use other substances (e.g. arrange a sober caregiver, create a safe sleeping environment, have emergency contacts, etc).

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## Physical activity and fresh air

Even a small amount of exercise can help boost your mood, increase energy levels, decrease stress and anxiety, and promote sleep. These are some ideas for me to get exercise (ask my partner/support to care for the baby while I do a physical activity I enjoy, walking, yoga or take my baby out on a walk in a stroller/carrier, etc):

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This is how I am going to get out of the house for fresh air/sun, even for a few minutes everyday:

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Pelvic health is having the best possible function of your bladder, bowel and reproductive organs. These are some ways I will remind myself to do my pelvic floor exercise (Be Pelvic Health Aware) [www.bepelvichealthaware.ca](http://www.bepelvichealthaware.ca) and if I have concerns I will talk to my health care provider or a pelvic floor physiotherapist in my community:

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## Mental health and well-being

Many individuals find it difficult to separate postpartum mood disorders from normal changes in becoming a parent. In the past these are signs that I am not coping well and may mean that I need help:

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In the past when I have struggled with mental health, transitions etc, this has helped:  
(Resources/ people/ activities/ medications etc)

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Here are some local community and postpartum peer supports both for myself and my partner/support so that I know where to get help if needed (e.g. my public health centre, community parent groups, library story time, la leche league group, walking group, parent and baby yoga, etc)

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These are some ideas for me to think about using the NESTS tool:  
(You may also refer to the NESTS for Well-being hand out for further supports and resources)  
[www.perinatalservicesbc.ca/Documents/Health-info/PSBC\\_NESTS\\_for\\_well-being.pdf](http://www.perinatalservicesbc.ca/Documents/Health-info/PSBC_NESTS_for_well-being.pdf)

**N:** NUTRITION (e.g. Favourite snacks, water bottle, etc)

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**E:** EXERCISE (e.g. Walking, yoga, etc)

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**S:** SLEEP (e.g. I will try to lie down when my baby is napping)

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**T:** TIME (e.g. Having a bath, reading a book, etc)

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**S:** SUPPORTS (e.g. Friends, family, community, etc)

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## Relationships and boundaries

Managing visitors: Having a large number of visitors in the early days can feel overwhelming. Here are ways I can comfortably make space for people I love: (e.g. Limit visits to 1hr, no holding baby, pick a chore from a list to help, delay visits until baby is X weeks old, etc)

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Unwanted advice: As you navigate your postpartum period and find your parenting style you will receive a lot of advice from family and friends. Sometimes cultural or generational differences will not align with your goals. This is what I will say when I receive unwanted advice:

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These are the ways my older children and/or partner like to spend special time with me or with visitors:

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These are things that my partner/support can do/say to help, and things that may be less helpful. My partner/support can also list ways I communicate well and not so well:

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I am a single parent and I can find support in my circle with these people or I can work on building a support network by::

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These are things that I know will make me feel unsafe:

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## Postpartum care reminders

Discuss your postpartum care with your care team and write down the details here:

Who will you be seeing:

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How to contact them:

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When can you expect to have a care visit with your team and how frequently after birth?

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Are there any medical conditions that you will need to follow up on after birth?

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Postpartum contraception:

Contraception is important to consider to ensure you are able to control if and/or when you would like to become pregnant again. For most people it is best to wait at least 1.5 years (18 months) before your next birth as this gap gives your body time to recover and gives a better chance for the next baby to be healthy. Talk to your health care provider to discuss your family planning hopes or plans. Your health care provider will work with you to support you with choosing the contraception that works best for you, your plans, and in consideration of your health history.