



Your Guide to

WRITING A POSTPARTUM PLAN

This guide is designed to help you navigate the first six weeks after your baby is born. It is a time of transition and recovery. For optimal health and bonding, fill out this guide and stick to it!

Birth Notifications:

The moments after birth can sometimes feel overwhelming if there is a lot of pressure from friends and family to be updated right away. Your priority is your new baby. Telling family in advance, when they will be notified and asking them to respectfully not disturb you until then, can have a lasting impact on the ease of the first hour.

When do I feel it is appropriate to announce the birth?

Who do I notify first?

Who will notify everyone else?

When will I post to social media?

When are others "Allowed" to post to social media?

Visitors Immediately After Birth:

The first hour after birth is considered the golden hour. Your new baby is discovering life outside and acclimating to it. This is a crucial time for baby to bond with parents. You may be learning to breastfeed for the first time. It is critical to long term success, that this hour be as undisturbed as possible.

Who will be allowed to visit immediately?

Note: If you do invite people in during this golden hour, ask them to please:

- wash their hands when they enter the room
- do not ask to hold the baby
- do not kiss baby on face or hands

First Two Weeks:

- Critical to breastfeeding
- Bed rest recommended
- Lots of skin to skin time with baby

You should be in bed, snuggled up, skin to skin as often as possible the first two weeks. Sleeping when the baby sleeps, and leaving all other aspects of care to someone else. This time is critical to your physical recovery and to establishing a healthy milk supply. It is recommended to keep visitors to a minimum and that those that do visit are people you are comfortable with seeing you topless, are sensitive to your needs, and you can be in your full range of feelings in front of. The first two weeks you are still learning how to feed your baby, it is not a time to cover up.

If you are having a hospital birth, it is likely you will have appointments in these first few weeks for your baby. On those days especially, please keep all other activity to a minimum. An increase in your bleeding is a key indicator if you are doing too much.

Who will prepare and bring me healthy meals while I am on bed rest?

After the first week, it can be helpful to plan for some daily activity. Just 30 minutes a day, go for a walk, or do some light stretching.

Also *after the first week* it can be helpful to spend some quality time with yourself *without* your baby. No more than 30 minutes.

Who will care for the baby while I get 30 minutes of me time?

What kinds of activities will make me feel like myself again as I adjust to a new normal?

What kinds of things make me feel special and pampered as I adjust to a new normal?

Who can I ask for help with in being pampered?

Weeks 3 to 6:

These weeks are still critical to recovery and breastfeeding, but complete bed rest is no longer needed if you are feeling up to being more active. Watch your bleeding and listen to your body. Return to bed rest if your bleeding increases or you are feeling run down.

This may be a good time to start implementing a self-care routine. If your baby is going longer stretches between feeds, this may be a good time for you to leave the baby with your partner or other trusted caregiver for up to two hours once a week. You will know your baby best and know how long is appropriate.

Note: It is not recommended to give a bottle to a baby until at least 4 weeks, so as not to interfere with breastfeeding. Many families never use a bottle at all. Please talk to a Certified Lactation Consultant if you plan to introduce a bottle.

What activities might I like to do without baby that will help me adjust to my new normal?

What activities might I like to do with baby that will help me adjust to my new normal?

This is also an excellent time to try out babywearing if you have not already done so! Wearing your baby is a great way to keep your hands free and keep your baby close, where they want to be. The first three months of your baby's life are like another trimester, only outside of the womb.

Recommended carriers:

First 3-6 months:

- Moby or other soft stretchy wrap
- Buckle carrier with infant insert
- Ring Sling

What kind of carrier do I want to try?

Food:

Healthy, nutrient dense food, is essential to your recovery. In addition to meals, please keep lots of snacks and a full water bottle close to where you find nursing most comfortable. Eat when the baby eats!

Who will help coordinate a food train?

What are my favorite healthy meals that people can bring?

What are my favorite meals at local restaurants that can be brought over or delivered?

What meals can I prepare and freeze in advance?

Who will prepare meals and bring them to me while I am on bed rest?

Who will do the grocery shopping if needed?

Resource List:

Fill this out completely and post it somewhere highly visible. You deserve a village to thrive. Do not hesitate to reach out and find support.

List of people that have offered to help us:

Name:

Phone Number:

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People I can call if I need to talk or need additional support:

Name:

Phone Number:

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People my partner can call if they need to talk or additional support:

Name:

Phone Number:

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Professional support we can call:

Name

Phone Number

Lactation Consultant:

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Postpartum Councillor:

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List of local support groups:

Usual meeting location, dates, and times:

Phone Number

La Leche League

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Babywearing International

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New Family/Father Support

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Some Additional Notes on Postpartum Depression:

Adjusting to a new normal after a baby can be difficult. It can be hard to determine if you need help or if you are just adjusting. Postpartum Depression does not look the same for everyone. There are variations such as anxiety, OCD, and even psychosis, in addition to or instead of what you may normally associate with symptoms of depression. The list at [postpartum progress](http://www.postpartumprogress.com) is an excellent resource for helping you figure out what's going on.

<http://www.postpartumprogress.com/the-symptoms-of-postpartum-depression-anxiety-in-plain-mama-english>

It can be hard to seek help when you are not feeling, thinking, and acting like yourself. Please list at least one trusted friend that you can ask ahead of time to review this list with you and will support you in getting help if you need it.

Name

Phone Number

Visitors in the early weeks:

Visitors after a new baby are often a welcomed event, however, keep in mind that this is a sensitive time.

Visitors should be those you feel comfortable:

- nursing uncovered in front of
- crying in front of
- and do not feel judged by

Also remember that visitors can be overstimulating to babies. Overstimulated babies have a harder time falling asleep and settling. Consider visitors that will be willing to lend a hand while you nap, or shower, not hold the baby while you clean.

The following pages contains a sample letter to friends and family when they visit. Please use as is, or use it to create something of your own.

If you feel more comfortable with having us tell your guests, we are happy to do so! We have also included a sign for the front door or entrance way. Print it out and post it!

Disconnect the doorbell, or at least tape a sign over it. You will ideally be sleeping during the day when your baby sleeps.

Dear friends and family,

We are excited for your visit and are thrilled to share our joy of our new baby with you. We need your help to make our transition smoother! To maximize recovery we will be spending as much time together, quietly resting and adjusting. The first weeks postpartum are critical to bonding and establishing a healthy milk supply and this means lots of skin to skin time with parents. We would love to share our baby with you, but we respectfully request that you not ask to hold the baby. Please also be sure to wash your hands when you visit. Kisses are welcome, but please not on babies face or hands. Please do not visit if you or your children are sick.

If you are not just dropping by food or groceries, and plan to stay a while, please consider doing one of the following to help us. We appreciate your love of our family in this delicate time.

Wash some dishes

Water the houseplants

Clean a bathroom

Take out the trash

Do a load of laundry, or even better, take a load and bring it back.

Sweep, Mop or Vacuum

Tidy up

Ask for a task

Run an errand

Sit with baby, or other children while we shower or nap

Thank you for your consideration and thoughtfulness in helping with this special transition time.

Love,

THIS HOME HAS A NEW BABY!

Dear Visitor,

This family is adjusting to a new normal and routine. It is critical that they spend as much time quietly resting with their new baby.

Unannounced guests can be really hard for a new family, please consider messaging them via text and if you get no response, please wait until you are invited.

DO NOT RING THE DOORBELL!

(They probably just fell asleep.)

If you have been invited in, consider the following:

Long visits can be hard on the family and over stimulating to babies. New families need healthy meals, not advice. Most families have a hard time asking for help, but every new family needs it. The following tasks would be helpful:

Wash some dishes

Sweep, Mop or Vacuum

Water the houseplants

Tidy up

Clean a bathroom

Ask for a task

Take out the trash

Run an errand

Do a load of laundry, or even better, take a load and bring it back.

Sit with baby, or other children while they shower or nap

If you are unable to help out, consider a donation towards a housecleaner, laundry service, or postpartum doula. Please wash your hands upon entering do not visit if you or your children are sick. Let the parents offer for you to hold the baby and please do not kiss baby on the face or hands.

Thank you so much for supporting the health and wellbeing of this family!

Love,
Doula Kathryn