



# POSTPARTUM CARE PLAN\*

Let's prepare for your postpartum adventure! Join me as we consider various aspects of postpartum life, such as rest, meals, mental health, child care, baby wellness, and feeding support. Feel free to work on this in sections and involve your partner or loved ones.

## GETTING REST

This is the secret to enjoying and finding strength for the early newborn weeks! Although it's not always possible, aim for at least five hours of uninterrupted nighttime sleep to help you function and promote your mental wellness. Useful strategies include finding nighttime help, splitting up the nighttime duties, going to bed when your little one does, and (of course) napping.

So, who can help watch your baby while you rest? Think about your community, including family, friends, neighbors, babysitters, coworkers, gym buddies, doulas, and your faith community.

### The Rest Squad



NAME	CONTACT INFO	AVAILABILITY	CAN THEY "MOVE IN"?
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

\*The tips here are adapted from DONA International's "Postpartum Plan for \_\_\_ Family," and Postpartum Support Virginia's "The Realistic Plan for the \_\_\_ Family." Mental health notes are based on Dr. Bennett's "Surveying the Elements of a Postpartum Plan" in *Postpartum Depression for Dummies*.

## WAYS TO GET REST WHILE OFF BABY DUTY:

- During part of the night, \_\_\_ feeds the baby (either breastmilk or formula) with a bottle. *(To maintain milk supply, mama can still pump every two to three hours.)*
- Sleep with earplugs or a sound machine
- For part of the night, at least, sleep in a room separate from the resident night owl
- Hire a babysitter, nanny, or postpartum doula to give respite during the day or night
- Other ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

## GETTING FED

Make life easier by giving your body the fuel it needs. This is especially important for the first two months when it seems you're climbing Machu Picchu. Stock up on freezer meals, fill up the pantry with nonperishables, and find grocery stores and restaurants that deliver.

Think about who can help prepare freezer meals before and after your little one arrives. A good way to spread out the home-cooked or ordered meals is to create a Mealtrain.com sign-up. Be sure to let people know if you have meal preferences or dietary restrictions.

## The Plan for Eating



The goal is to have food prepared and delivered for the first \_\_\_ weeks postpartum. To help prepare, list each of the following:

Meals that will be prepared and frozen *before the big day*:

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Try to limit processed foods—you won't get the same health and energy benefits as with real foods. Drink plenty of water while limiting sodas, juices, and energy drinks.

People who can bring nutritious meals *postpartum*:

NAME	CONTACT INFO
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Restaurants with tasty/nutritious menu items:

NAME	CONTACT INFO	DELIVERY/TAKE-OUT?
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Grocery stores that deliver:

NAME	CONTACT INFO
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

# CARING FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Mamas and partners *both* need time to care for their mental wellness. Remember, the postpartum period is a time when parents are more vulnerable to perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs). If you're struggling with mental health problems or have encountered such problems postpartum, it's wise to be plugged in with good mental health care.

Since each day is a new day, your mental health needs may vary from one to the next. Check in with yourself and communicate your daily needs to your partner/support people. For quick "check-ins" throughout the day, consider using a mental wellness scale of 1 to 10 (1 = doing poorly, 10 = feeling optimal). If you're not even sure what you need, opt for going outside, taking a shower, sleeping, eating a nutritious snack, connecting with a friend, reading, or watching TV.

  
To more fully enjoy these special yet demanding days, aim for at least a smidgen of time for daily self-care. Keep tabs on how you're doing, and get timely, professional help when needed.

## The Mental Wellness Plan



Activities or routines that boost my mental wellness:

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Warning signs that indicate I'm not doing well (*share this with your trusted support people*):

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Knowledgeable professionals who support my mental health:

NAME

CONTACT INFO

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Additional mental wellness support organizations/groups  
(online or in-person):

NAME

CONTACT INFO

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



**IN CASE OF  
EMERGENCY:**

Dial 911, go to the nearest emergency room, and/or call 988, the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

**Fill in the Blanks**



Postpartum, I plan to proactively check in about my mental health with my maternity care or mental health provider at \_\_\_ weeks after delivery. *(Discuss this with your provider.)*

If I'm struggling with my mental health, the first person I (or my main support person) will contact is: \_\_\_\_\_

**PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**

- Postpartum Support International: [Postpartum.net](https://www.postpartum.net)
- Postpartum Men: [Fatheringtogether.org](https://www.fatheringtogether.org), [Bootcampfornewdads.org](https://www.bootcampfornewdads.org)
- Postpartum Progress: [Postpartumprogress.com](https://www.postpartumprogress.com)

## Let's Reflect

What are your concerns, fears, and dreams for the postpartum period?

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If you've struggled with postpartum mental health problems before, what helped and what didn't?

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If you're in a relationship, what activities and "breathers" help you connect and strengthen your relationship? *(Consider these questions separately, chat about your answers together, and star the ones you'd like to prioritize postpartum.)*

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# FINDING COMMUNITY

Having help with your baby offers you a break and a chance to connect with others, while also expanding your little one's horizons. While parenting/baby groups can begin anytime postpartum, some fun baby classes (like swimming) can start as early as six months.

In terms of child care, the hardest aspect is finding people you trust. Think about close friends and family members and consider asking trusted people for names of babysitters or day cares they like. Other options include asking a stay-at-home mama for help (or swap), finding a nanny, or getting recommendations from mom/baby group leaders, your faith community's nursery coordinators, local colleges, or online caregiving companies (like Care.com).

## The Supportive Village



People who can provide child care:

NAME	CONTACT INFO	AVAILABILITY	HOURLY WAGE
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

People to call when in a child-care bind:

NAME	CONTACT INFO
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Day care options (*including in-home, child-care centers, Headstart, etc.*):

NAME	CONTACT INFO	COST
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

In-person or virtual parent/baby groups:

NAME	CONTACT INFO	DAY/TIME	COST
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers who have young babies:

NAME	CONTACT INFO
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

# WELLNESS FOR BABY

Once your baby's born, you'll have plenty of questions about your newborn's health and well-being. This is a great time to ask your maternity care provider about the process of finding a healthcare provider for your baby. Do the research to learn who might be a good fit. Remember, you can always switch later if needed.

Breastfeeding and bottle feeding take practice. While it may end up being one of your favorite bonding moments with your baby, initially, there's a steep learning curve. Having knowledgeable, up-to-date support is a lifesaver. Consider contacting lactation consultants (even if formula feeding!), postpartum doulas, and healthcare providers, and be sure to ask for local and online resource recommendations.

## Wellness and Feeding Resources



Healthcare provider options for baby:

NAME	CONTACT INFO	AFTER-HOURS SUPPORT
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Local resources, both personal and professional, to help me feed my baby  
(*think lactation consultants, postpartum doulas, healthcare providers, nonprofits, etc.*):

NAME	CONTACT INFO
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

NAME

CONTACT INFO

_____	_____
_____	_____

Supportive people I can call for up-to-date info and recommendations for feeding:

NAME

CONTACT INFO

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## LACTATION AND DOULA RESOURCES

### Lactation Support

- International Lactation Consultant Association: [Ilca.org](http://Ilca.org)
- United States Lactation Consultant Association (USLCA): [Uslca.org](http://Uslca.org)
- The Fed Is Best Foundation: [Fedisbest.org](http://Fedisbest.org)
- WIC breastfeeding support: [Wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov](http://Wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov)

### Postpartum Doulas

- DONA International: [Dona.org](http://Dona.org)
- Childbirth and Postpartum Professional Association: [Cappa.net](http://Cappa.net)