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6 ways to help moms get time to heal

By SHARON MACGREGOR

Brand new moms — and their families — should be aware that there's a real medical need for the new mom to have time to heal and recuperate.

"While recovery time may vary among women depending on vaginal delivery or cesarean and whether it's a first child, full recovery may take anywhere from 3-6 weeks," says Belinda Rubino, nurse practitioner specializing in midwifery at the Port Jervis branch of the Middletown Community Health Center.

Rubino tells expectant moms who complain about sleep problems they encounter during that last trimester gets them ready for the lack of sleep they'll experience in the future.

"It can be nature's way of preparing them for life with a newborn. The body has to learn how to function on less uninterrupted sleep." She reminds new and experienced moms to rest or nap when baby naps and, "No matter how well you feel, take it slow." Rest is not only physically important to healing but for mental and emotional health as well.

Kristen Curley and Doug Henery of Tuxedo were grateful for the help around the house before bringing their newborn, Jack, home.

Says Curley, "My mom cleaned our place really well the morning we were coming home from the hospital. She went food shopping, made sure we had microwavable meals and cold cuts. We were ready for all the guests we would have stopping by to meet Jack."



Doug Henery and Kristen Curley of Tuxedo, with son, Jack. New mom, Kristen, welcomed help even BEFORE she came home with her newborn.

Tips

- Be selective regarding advice. "While many new moms want to check with someone else if they should or shouldn't put a hat on their newborn, not everyone is an authority," says Rubino.

- Plan ahead as much as possible and enjoy time alone without the worry of rushing back to work.

- Find a balance. Kristen Curley advises new parents to "nurture the relationship as a couple. It is tough not to let the newborn completely consume you to the point where it's all you talk about and think about."

- Don't rush baby. Although it's tempting to wish for those milestones, like crawling and walking, don't. They grow fast enough!

- Enlist other children at home to help with small chores like sorting laundry, cleaning off the table. Let them help and create a stronger family bond.

- Don't neglect the basics. According to *Mothers Need Time-Outs, Too*, new moms need to take their own self-care seriously. That includes daily grooming, healthy eating, and exercise. Enlist a local teen for babysitting so you can get your yearly checkups. Lastly, find support groups for new mothers.

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