



# POSTPARTUM QUESTIONNAIRE

## PART I

## OUR FEELINGS—ALL OF THEM!

1. Often when we're pregnant, we don't really know what to expect when the baby finally arrives, and we all have our own individual responses. In the first days and weeks after your baby was born, what do you most remember feeling about your new infant and your new role?
2. What felt most comfortable about being a new mother?
3. What felt most stressful about being a new mother?
4. Did any of your feelings surprise you? Which ones?
5. What was your greatest fear as a new mother?
6. As we know, the arrival of a baby can have a powerful effect on marriage and partner relationships. If you shared new parenting with a husband or partner, how did the new baby affect that relationship?
7. Often, as new mothers, we feel afraid that something's wrong with we feel anything other than happiness and joy. Our own negative or ambivalent feelings about the baby and about our new responsibility frighten us. No one has ever told us that other women also have those feelings and that it's all right, even normal. Do you (or did you) feel that it's all right to admit or talk about any negative or ambivalent feelings you have as a new mother? Why or why not?
8. Although we're often not encouraged to talk about our deepest feelings as new moms, the truth is that simply sharing our feelings with other women can help alleviate some of the anxiety and stress we feel postpartum. Is there another person with whom you can speak honestly, one-on-one, and feel that you are heard, understood, and encouraged? Who is this person, and what kind of feelings did you talk about? How often was he or she available? How did he or she respond?





# POSTPARTUM QUESTIONNAIRE

9. No one tells us that the transition to motherhood is a gradual and major life change requiring support, encouragement, and education. Did you feel it was all right to ask for help after your baby was born? If so, what did that help consist of, and who provided it?
10. If you did not feel comfortable asking for or admitting that you needed help, what made comfortable about it?
11. Why do you think it's hard for many postpartum women to ask for or admit to a need for help, companionship, moral support, etc.?
12. In retrospect, what kind of help do you wish you had had that you didn't have?
13. Were you aware of the full range of feelings other new mothers experience, or did you feel that you were the only new mom who ever felt that way? If you did know that other women experienced similar feelings, how did you gain that awareness?
14. Did you experience the “baby blues” or any form of postpartum depression? Please describe how you felt, how old your baby was when it occurred, and whether and how you got help for it.
15. Did you feel that any person, experience, or class really prepared you for the range of feelings you had as a new mother? If yes, please identify your source of preparedness and describe.
16. Were you able to do anything to help yourself with any of the difficult issues or feelings you experienced postpartum? How did this help you both short- and long-term?
17. For the dreamers among you-sleep-deprived as we are during those early weeks and months, often our dreams tell a lot about our exhaustion, anxiety, endurance, euphoria-please recount any outstanding dream or dreams from your postpartum period. If possible, give the age of your child at the time you had the dream or dreams.





# POSTPARTUM QUESTIONNAIRE

## PART II

### FEEDING YOUR BABY

1. Did you breastfeed or bottle-feed?
2. How did you make your decision about how to feed your baby?
3. If you breastfed, how did you learn how to do it (e.g., just did it by yourself because everyone told you it was "natural," or learned from a family member, lactation consultant, class, nursing staff)?
4. If you delivered in the hospital, were the hospital staff consistent in their instruction? Was the routine supportive or sabotaging? (E.g., did you have rooming-in? Was your baby fed bottles in the nursery?) Does your state have guidelines regarding the hospital policy and breastfeeding support?
5. Did you have any special problems with breastfeeding? If so, who helped you to solve them (e.g., hospital or breastfeeding clinic warm-line, individual visit to lactation clinic, La Leche League or other support group)?
6. How long did you breastfeed? (If you still are, please indicate how long you have been nursing and how long you will continue.)
7. Did you breastfeed in public? Did you ever feel other people had a problem with this? Please be specific.

## PART III

### WORKING: New MOTHERS WORKING OUTSIDE THE HOME

1. Sometimes we don't have a choice about whether we stay at home or go back to work. Did you return to work because you:





# POSTPARTUM QUESTIONNAIRE

- a. had to in order to keep your job?
- b. had to for economic reasons
- c. chose to?
- d. other (Please explain.)

2. How old was your baby when you returned to work?

3. What is your job, and how many hours a week do you work?

4. In what state of the country do you work? Are there any state laws governing maternity or parental leave policy? (Please be specific if you feel can in outlining the laws.)

5. What were the terms of your maternity or parental leave (e.g. how much time off, with or without pay, job security)? Did you feel they were adequate?

6. What would be your ideal terms for maternity or parental leave?

7. Were there any particular arrangements that helped you or made it easier for you to return to work (e.g., flextime, job-sharing, part-time employment agencies)?

8. What arrangements were you able to make for your childcare? Did your place of employment help with this (e.g., subsidizing cost of care, on-site day care)?

9. How did you feel about leaving your baby to return to work? Was the workplace supportive in helping you deal with these often powerful feelings? (E.g., Did they offer noontime parenting classes? Support groups?) Please describe in detail.

10. Were you breastfeeding, and did you continue after you returned to work? Did the workplace support your breastfeeding routine? If yes, please explain in detail how it did.





# POSTPARTUM QUESTIONNAIRE

## PART IV

### WORKING: NEW MOTHERS WORKING FOR PAY INSIDE THE HOME

1. If you work at home for pay, how old was your baby when you resumed work?
2. What is your work, and how many hours a week do you work at home?
3. Did you go back to work because you:
  - a. had to for economic reasons?
  - b. chose to for other reasons (e.g., missed professional identity, felt the walls closing in, loved your work)? Please don't hesitate to be specific.
  - c. other (Please explain.)
4. What arrangements, if any, did you make for childcare?
5. What was the hardest thing about working at home as a new mom?
6. What was the best thing about working at home as a new mom?

## PART V

### NEW MOTHERS AT HOME NOT WORKING FOR PAY

1. Did you work for pay before your baby was born? If yes, what was your job, and was it inside or outside the home?
2. Sometimes the cost of childcare makes return to work prohibitive. Are you not working now because:
  - a. you could not afford to go back to work given childcare costs?
  - b. you chose not to and preferred to be at home with your baby?
  - c. other (Please describe.)





# POSTPARTUM QUESTIONNAIRE

3. If you did work for pay before your baby was born, what if anything do you miss about your work life now that you are at home as a full-time mother?
4. Even though you are not working for pay, do you have baby-sitting or child-care help? Please describe (e.g., number of hours a week: hired baby-sitter, relative, baby-sitting co-op).
5. What are the greatest rewards about being home with your baby full-time?
6. What are the greatest challenges about being at home with your baby full-time?

## PART VI

### THE ONE-YEAR MILESTONE

1. For moms of one-year-olds or older: Some mothers consider the twelve-month mark a turning point. Did you have any special feelings at your child's first birthday? Please describe them if you did.

## PART VII

### SECOND TIME AROUND

1. How old was your first child when your second was born?
2. How did you feel during your second pregnancy about your relationship with your firstborn and the impending change?
3. Second-time moms may feel more prepared for motherhood in some of the practical aspects (diapering, bathing, etc.), but also more exhausted and overwhelmed by logistics and new emotional challenges. Did you plan for or handle your second postpartum period differently from the first? How (e.g., more help)?
4. Was there anything that especially helped you to prepare your firstborn for the arrival of a sibling?





# POSTPARTUM QUESTIONNAIRE

PART VIII

## FINALLY ...

1. Now that you are a new mother, how long would you say the postpartum period lasts? Please circle one:

- two weeks
- six weeks
- three months
- six months
- twelve months
- more than twelve months

2. Are there any special resources or programs in your area that you think other women should know about? Please give their names, addresses, telephone numbers, and a short description of what they do.

