

GUIDE FOR NEW MOMS



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Hi, I'm Rheanna. I've created the "Guide for New Moms" to be a simple yet effective tool that helps to address the most difficult things a new mom might experience. I believe that a happy and healthy mom is a happy and healthy baby. You deserve to feel just as loved and safe as you make your baby feel. As you begin this incredible journey of motherhood, please know that you're not alone. Your strength, love, and nurturing spirit will guide you through the highs and lows of this beautiful chapter. Please reach out if you need more information.

Wishing you nothing but the best,

♥ Rheanna

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DISCLAIMER

The content in this guide is designed to provide helpful information on the subjects discussed. This guide or the contents contained in it are not a replacement or substitute for treatment of any kind. This guide is not meant to be used, nor should it be used, to diagnose or treat any medical condition. It is for informational and educational purposes only. It does not substitute or supercede medical advice or care provided by your healthcare provider or any other medical professional. All material appearing here (“content”) is protected by copyright under U.S. Copyright laws and is the property of Hope Canyon Counseling, PLLC. You may not copy, reproduce, distribute, publish, display, perform, modify, create derivative works, transmit, photocopy, record, or in any way exploit any such content, nor may you distribute any part of this content over any network, including a local area network, sell or offer it for sale, or use such content to construct any kind of database.

NOTES

Use this space to take notes of things important to you while you read this guide.

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GUIDE FOR NEW MOMS

PRIORITIZE TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

This is above the ordinary "self-care." We are talking about your actual human needs. Eating, taking a shower, sleeping and feeling cared for - just as you care for your baby.

ASK FOR AND ACCEPT HELP, EVEN IF YOU DON'T NEED IT

If someone is coming over it is perfectly acceptable to ask that they get a pick-up order for you or bring something you need on the way. Maybe someone offers to hold the baby while you eat, but you aren't hungry and you really just wish they would help with laundry. Ask them to do that! It's not rude. They are coming over to help - tell them what you actually need.

CONNECT WITH OTHER MOMS

Get together with friends who are moms, join mom groups, online forums, or attend local support groups to share experiences, advice, and receive emotional support from fellow new moms.

GET OUT OF THE HOUSE

Being a new mom can cause you to feel, or actually be very alone. Isolating yourself even more is a risk factor for depression or anxiety because it takes you away from the people and experiences you had pre-baby. Going to a friend's or family member's house, walking around a mall or department store, child friendly restaurants or coffee shops, or just anywhere you have the confidence to go can help you feel more like yourself.

CELEBRATE THE SMALL WINS

Acknowledge and celebrate the small victories and accomplishments, both for you and your baby.

FIND TIME FOR ACTIVITIES YOU ENJOY

Pre-baby activities may not always be realistic but staying in touch with the things that you enjoy will go a long way towards helping you feel like yourself.

ACCEPT IMPERFECTIONS

Understand that parenting isn't about being perfect. Mistakes happen, and learning as you go is part of the journey.

HEALTHY NUTRITION

A balanced diet is vital during this time. Your body is working to recover from giving birth and is requiring some extra care. This is especially true if you are breastfeeding, as you are giving nutrition to your baby as well. Making plans ahead for your snacks and meals will greatly reduce your stress. Moms will often find that they do not have time to create a meal for themselves (or the only time you do is when the baby is sleeping, and you are trying to keep the house quiet) so having nutrient dense snacks on hand is key. Making several servings of dishes you enjoy is an easy way to have things available that you like. Food such as breakfast burritos, muffins, soups and stews or anything that can be frozen and re-heated are very helpful to have on hand. For a quicker meal, things like a bagged salad, yogurt cups with fruit, mixed nuts can have a good amount of nutrition. Staying hydrated during this time is also important. It's a good idea to talk to your medical professional about what the appropriate amount of hydration is right for you.



KEEP THINGS SIMPLE

Adjust your expectations. Now isn't the time to plan for big changes or life altering choices. What you can accomplish in a day will look completely different now. When we don't acknowledge that, it can create a feeling of shame or guilt for us down the road. Be sure to also set up realistic expectations for your baby and their milestones. Each child develops in their own pace. Talk with your child's medical professionals about concerns you may have.

STAY INFORMED, BUT NOT OVERWHELMED

While it's good to gather information about baby care, trust your instincts and don't let yourself get overwhelmed by excessive advice. There are **A LOT** of websites, blogs and social media pages dedicated to motherhood. Some of them are helpful and some of them are exploiting the vulnerability you may be feeling right now. You and your baby's medical professionals will give you the information you need. If your access to them is limited, seek out trusted sources like family and friends with babies or moms' groups. If you decide that limiting your social media and internet time isn't best for you, consider blocking certain pages, channels, words or hashtags. Notice how I "if you decide?" That's because I want you to trust yourself during this time. You know what is best.

SLEEP WHEN YOU CAN

Your baby's sleep schedule is going to be wildly different than yours, so my best advice is to sleep when the baby sleeps. For two parent households, taking 'shifts' or certain nights may work.

For one parent households, request the help of family and friends or even night nannies or postpartum doulas. Plan prior to you feeling sleep deprived, as the helpers may have to make some arrangements and not be able to help immediately. When you do have someone to help, even if it's your partner, you may experience feeling uneasy having someone else care for your child - even their own parent. Using sleeping aids like a sound machine, ear plugs or headphones may be helpful. Sleeping in a room that is far away from the baby is also recommended, so that you are less likely to hear the baby.

Because sleep is a critical part of overall wellness, some moms may choose a medication to help them. If you think this might be appropriate for you, please speak with your medical professionals. You deserve to be rested and there is no shame in needing help to achieve that.



PRACTICE MINDFULNESS

If I were to ask you to recall your favorite vacation, you would tell me where you went, what time of year it was, who you were with and what kind of adventures you had. Being able to recall that so vividly is you practicing mindfulness – unintentionally. The only difference is that now, I want you to do it intentionally! How does your body feel when you're getting overwhelmed? Do you have tension in your body when you feel sad, or tired, or angry? Notice the emotions that come up when you get tense.

Practicing breathing exercises (4-7-8 breathing is my favorite) or doing guided meditation (tons of videos on YouTube, Headspace or Calm apps) can help you to slow down and relax your body.

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR PARTNER

The relationship with your partner has fundamentally changed. Both of you may feel like your life is a bit chaotic. Working on open communication with your partner about your needs, feelings, and any challenges you're facing is extremely important. Taking a moment to express gratitude to one another, even the small things will go a long way to helping each of you feel loved and appreciated during this time. Remember, you're a team in this new adventure.

IT'S NORMAL NOT TO ENJOY EVERY PART OF MOTHERHOOD

Just because you don't enjoy each part, does not mean that you love your child any differently or less. This is a huge change in your life and it will take time to learn what works for you and your baby.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP WHEN NEEDED

If you're feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or wonder if you are experiencing postpartum depression or anxiety, don't hesitate to reach out to a medical professional or mental health professional for support.

RESOURCES

MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE

1-833-943-5746

(1-833-9-HELP4MOMS)

POSTPARTUM SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL

www.postpartumsupport.net/get-help/

1-800-944-4773

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