



Postpartum Plan



This guide is tailored for expecting parents, with a special emphasis on nurturing the mental well-being of the mother. This comprehensive guide offers invaluable tips and suggestions to help families prioritize quality time together while navigating the early stages of parenthood with confidence and ease.

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Food

If you were to nourish yourself with the same level of care as you do for your baby, consider how you would choose to feed yourself. Consume meals with self-love in mind.

Preplanning your snacks and meals can alleviate some stress and overwhelm in your day. Many new mothers often find themselves confined under a sleeping baby, making it challenging to access or prepared food. Depriving yourself of proper nourishment is not acceptable. If you have recently gone through pregnancy or childbirth, your body is in a crucial phase of recovery and requires care. If you're breastfeeding, providing your body with the necessary fuel is vital to sustain the remarkable process of lactation.



All new mothers deserve an abundance of hydrating fluids and nutritious foods. Ensuring a variety of tasty options are readily available enhances the likelihood that you will consume enough nourishment. Having food brought to you can be perceived as a gesture of love and care from others, offering comfort for the emotional challenges that new mothers often face.

Freezing meals in advance:

When you find yourself with some additional time, particularly before giving birth, take the opportunity to prepare and freeze some of your preferred meals. Opt for straightforward recipes that only require reheating. If your creations are more intricate, affix cooking instructions to the lids so that others can easily prepare them for you.

Three easy and nutritious meals we can prepare in advance are:

Here are some ideas about food. You will appreciate having clear ideas and plans later.

Water

Ensure you're adequately hydrated! If you're breastfeeding, it's crucial to notably increase your water intake. If you experience persistent fatigue or dehydration, consult your doctor. Keep additional water bottles in each room to stay hydrated, especially when you find yourself confined under a baby.

Restaurant delivery

It's a great choice if it's within your budget. Share your top restaurant picks and favorite dishes here. Feel free to distribute this to others so they can place orders for you.

Italian: _____ Favorite dish: _____

Chinese: _____ Favorite dish: _____

Mexican: _____ Favorite dish: _____

Other favorites: _____

Snacks

Think of one-handed snacks that you can eat while doing something with baby.

Fruit: _____

Granola bars / protein bars: _____

Crackers: _____

Others: _____

Easy food

Sandwich (ingredients): _____

Cereal (what brand of cereal and type of milk): _____

Yogurt: _____

Smoothies (ingredients): _____

Food allergies

☐ Peanuts

☐ Gluten

☐ Dairy/Milk

☐ Eggs

☐ Shellfish

☐ Tree nuts

☐ Soy

☐ Wheat

☐ Other: _____

I Dislike

Meal Train

Fill in the following prompts, then copy and paste this information for your Meal Train coordinator. You can either print out the card to hand to your organizer or simply email them the details.

Check out MealTrain.com for more information

Meal Train for

My email address:

My favorite dish:

I'm allergic to:

I dislike:

I'm craving:

Other people in my house cannot have:

Thank you so much for your support and the thoughtful, nourishing gift you've shared with me and my family.

Sleep

Your baby's sleep pattern will likely differ significantly from yours, so align your sleep schedule with the baby's. In two-parent households, consider taking shifts or designating certain nights for each parent. For single-parent households, seek assistance from family, friends, or consider hiring night nannies or postpartum doulas. It's advisable to plan ahead before sleep deprivation sets in, as helpers may need time to make arrangements.

When you do have support, it's normal to feel uneasy about someone else caring for your child, even if it's their parent. Utilizing sleep aids like sound machines, earplugs, or headphones may prove beneficial. Sleeping in a room away from the baby is also recommended to minimize disturbances.

Given the critical role of sleep in overall well-being, some moms may opt for medication assistance. If you're considering this option, please consult with your medical professionals. You deserve to be well-rested, and there is no shame in seeking help to achieve that.



Babies typically experience more tranquility in the initial weeks, followed by increased fussiness, often coinciding with partners returning to work. Crying peaks at 6-8 weeks postpartum, so ensure additional support during this period. It's normal for couples to face disagreements amidst the postpartum challenges, influenced by new experiences, steep learning curves, sleep deprivation, and hormones. Don't panic; things will stabilize as you collaborate to establish your "new normal." Seek assistance if challenges persist.

Many couples find resuming sexual activity takes longer than the anticipated six weeks, and a disparity in sex drive is common in the first postpartum year. This doesn't indicate issues in your relationship. Stay connected through alternative means, and your sex life will likely return in due course.

If any aspects of the birth were distressing, seek out a familiar, trustworthy, and empathetic listener to discuss it. This person can guide you to additional support, if necessary, as birth trauma can impact both parents.

Recognize that the postpartum period can be isolating at times, so compile a list of contacts on the last page. Establish a support network with local services and professionals to create robust branches and a secure foundation for your family nest.

What is your plan for sleep emergencies?

New parents often grapple with significant challenges related to sleep – make sure to discuss and negotiate it!

Our night feeds/day naps/weekend sleep-in arrangements

Dividing the night: I take half, my partner takes the other half

What half I will take: _____

What half my partner will take: _____

Who is available to help out at night?

Names of family: _____

Names of friends: _____

Names of hired helpers (night nannies, doulas, etc):

Name 1: _____ Phone/email: _____

Availability: ☐ Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

Name 2: _____ Phone/email: _____

Availability: ☐ Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

Name 3: _____ Phone/email: _____

Availability: ☐ Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

Ways to cover up baby sounds while I am trying to sleep

☐ Different room ☐ Earplugs ☐ Soft music

☐ Sound machine ☐ Staying in a hotel

☐ Going to someone else's house (who?): _____

For Mom / Stay-at home parent

Prioritizing your health and well-being is essential, as it contributes to your physical, mental, and emotional coping mechanisms.

What brings me joy? _____

What makes me comfortable? _____

How and when do I feel most relaxed: _____

Engaging in mild physical activity helps reduce stress and enhances mood. Options for gentle exercise or activities I can do include: _____

Places I can go when I need to get out of the house

Experiencing motherhood for the first time may lead to feelings of solitude, or the reality of being alone with baby. Increasing your isolation poses a risk for depression or anxiety, as it separates you from the people and activities you were familiar with before having a baby. Visiting a friend or family member, strolling through a mall or department store, choosing child-friendly restaurants or coffee shops, or simply going to places where you feel confident can contribute to regaining a sense of yourself.

My favorite coffee shop: _____

My local community center or or gym: _____

Local park: _____

Family friendly restaurant: _____

Mom groups I've wanted to go to: _____

If I need a time out, I can: _____

Once a week I'd like to: _____

Once a month I'd like to: _____

If I only have 15 minutes to care for myself, I can: _____

If I only have 30 minutes to care for myself, I can: _____

If I only have one hour to care for myself, I can: _____

Regularly communicate with your partner to inquire about their well-being and thoughts. Maintaining this connection is crucial during the postpartum period, as your partner experiences their own stresses and requires moments of downtime.

Ways my partner can support me best are: _____

Your partner is navigating parenthood and discovering their own approach. Provide ample space for them to find their way, fostering confidence and self-esteem, which positively influences their relationship with your baby.

Ways I can support my partner are: _____

For Dad/Partner



You may have observed shifts in your relationship with your partner. Introducing a new member into the family can lead to a different perspective on your partner, involving both appreciation and moments of disappointment and irritation. Many couples start feeling neglected or let down as the demands of caring for a newborn leave little time or energy for each other. The challenges of managing sleep, changing diapers, and understanding the needs of a crying baby can be overwhelming.

Becoming parents presents a significant opportunity for growth and healing, but this growth often arises from encounters with pain and stress. The early months of parenthood can be challenging and lonely. Approach your family with compassion and a team spirit, emphasizing open communication. Your partnership undergoes a profound transformation, and while communication may have been challenging before, it becomes even more critical as new parents.

Acknowledge that everything has changed, and both of you might feel as though your world has been turned upside down. Aligning your perspectives can help you navigate these challenges more smoothly. In the early stages of parenthood, resentment can grow like weeds in an untended garden when there is a lack of understanding or effective communication of needs and expectations.

The strain of having a baby can impact your relationship, and seeking guidance on what to discuss and how to communicate effectively can be beneficial. If you find it challenging to navigate these conversations on your own, external support can provide valuable assistance without causing harm to your relationship.

Ways I can care for my baby include: _____

Ways I can take a time out are: _____

Ways I can reduce my partners mental and physical load are: _____

Ways my partner can support me best are: _____

Ways I can support my partner are: _____

What is your role in your new family?

You serve as the foundational support, offering love, care, and protection—the crucial difference between your partner and baby merely surviving and truly thriving. Consider how your actions and behaviors contribute to her sense of this support.

Your partner requires your care to lighten her load. She needs love, nourishment, hydration, adequate rest, shower time, sleep, breaks, and perhaps even opportunities to step away for a bit. Express your gratitude, acknowledging her excellent job and recognizing her as an amazing mother—your words matter. Shield her from external elements, such as people, tasks, or overstimulation, enabling her to rest and concentrate on the baby. You possess the ability to provide this essential protection, highlighting your vital importance.

If you find yourself grappling with challenges in your new role, remember that you're not alone, and you deserve care and assistance. Recognize that you too need a support team.

Friends you can reach out to: _____

Trusted people I can talk openly to: _____

People who can help me get stuff done or be available for recreation: _____

Are you interested in linking up with fellow dads and partners who are navigating the same phase of life? It can be incredibly comforting to share experiences, receive encouragement, and draw inspiration from those going through similar situations. Numerous dads' groups are available, so consider searching for ones near your location.

For both Mom & Dad (parents)

The more relaxed and adaptable you are, the smoother your transition into family life will be. Adjusting and recovering can be more exhausting than anticipated, requiring at least 3–5 hours a day dedicated to observing and understanding your baby for effective bonding. Ease the pressure on yourselves and each other by avoiding additional major life projects. Embrace shortcuts like frozen meals, takeouts, or deliveries to prioritize your time. It's okay if the house is a bit chaotic; it can be sorted out later. Approach parenthood as a learning experience rather than striving for expertise, supporting each other along the way.

While breastfeeding is rewarding, it comes with its challenges. Bottle feeding may bring its own set of feelings, including guilt. Find ways to provide support for both you and your partner in navigating these aspects of parenting.

Our sick baby arrangements: _____

We can ask friends/family/helpers to bring: _____

A time limit for visitors is: _____

When we are tired, or baby needs to feed when can ask visitors to leave by:

We can plan for our best birth by: _____



What thoughts do we have regarding roles and responsibilities within our home? _____

Which aspects of parenting do we find common ground on, and what areas do we still need to clarify or resolve? _____

Who is getting up in the middle of the night with the baby? _____

Our Supports

Who can you reach out to when you require assistance? What specific tasks or support will you request from them? Raising a family is a collaborative effort, and parenting in isolation is not the intended path. For many of us, the arrival of a new child reveals itself as one of the loneliest chapters in our lives, especially when living far from family or loved ones. In bustling cities, where many are transplants, building a local support network becomes crucial. With a newborn, having a reliable team of supporters is vital. When assembling a team from scratch, identifying the type of assistance you need can help prevent discomfort and disappointment.

Local friends or family we can call when we need help: _____

Who can step in for us, during the day, so we can get out: _____

Services

House cleaning: _____

Stores that deliver: _____

Outside/lawn maintenance: _____

Other: _____

Chores

You'll likely lack the time and energy for your usual chores. Create a list of tasks that are necessary or very important for you. These can be chores that your supports can help with, or that you can negotiate with your partner. Collaborate to assign responsibilities, considering the tendency to overestimate and overextend, with a focus on nesting and resting as your priority. If possible, outsource tasks and remain open to flexibility.

[illegible]

Support groups

Local play groups: _____

Mom support group: _____

Parent support group: _____

Baby friendly fitness group: _____

Breastfeeding Support group: _____

Mental Health Support group: _____

Online support groups: _____

Hotlines for advice and support

Parenting advice: _____

Breastfeeding advice: _____

Others: _____

Professionals

Pediatrician: _____

Primary Care Doctor (Mom's): _____

OB-GYN: _____

Maternal Fetal Medicine Provider: _____

Midwife: _____

Physical therapist: _____

Massage therapist: _____

Chiropractor: _____

Doula: _____

Lactation consultant/Breastfeeding: _____

Therapist: _____

Psychiatrist: _____

Resources

Maternal Mental Health Hotline	1-833-9-HELP4MOMS
Postpartum Support International	1-800-944-4773
Arizona birth to five hotline	877-705-KIDS (5437)

Regarding your mental health

Welcoming a new baby into your world can be a joyful time, but let's face it, there are a ton of changes that a baby brings with them. As both moms and dads can experience increased stress, difficulty sleeping on top of other things! You know your partner best so you are the first to know if the other person seems to be having a hard time getting used to your new life. Somewhere between 60-80% of new moms can experience the "baby blues" and of woman who are pregnant or have given birth over the past year, nearly 20% will experience postpartum depression. See the graphic below for more information.

Postpartum Depression

us

The Baby Blues

Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities

Ongoing feelings of guilt, inadequacy, hopelessness

Mood is primarily unhappy or sad, angry or irritable

Struggles to care for self or infant/family

Intrusive/scary thoughts

Symptoms last more than 2 weeks, can occur within one year postpartum

Occasional mood swings

Fatigue

Impatience

Predominant mood is happy

Resolves on its own while implementing coping skills

Symptoms begin shortly after childbirth and subside in about two weeks

The below area can be cut out and place on easily accessible area

Important Info for babysitters, in-home professionals

Mom's cell phone: _____

Dad's cell phone: _____

Home address: _____

Pediatrician name, address & phone number: _____

Other important info:

Need more insight or support?

Hope Canyon Counseling

Hopecanyoncounseling.com

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call or text 602-492-5686

Head to the website to check-out my blog, or to get your free copy of:

Guide for New Moms

Value Checklist

DBT Cheat Sheet

