

FAMILY, HOME AND BABY



CREATING EASE FOR YOUR TRANSITION

# Postpartum Wellness Plan

[www.DOULATRaining.ca](http://www.DOULATRaining.ca)



# Creating a Plan

The postpartum period, also known as the fourth trimester, is marked by significant shifts: of the body, mind, self and family. After birth, you're experiencing major hormonal changes, healing from delivery and immediately responsible for the care and feeding of an entirely new human. Add in chronic sleep deprivation and increased nutrient needs, and you have a recipe for imbalance.

Studies have shown that getting additional social support during this time—asking for and receiving help—can prevent postpartum depression.

A postpartum plan, therefore, should outline the nutrition, sleep, support and self-care needs of the birther during the first 40 days of postpartum—at least. Coming up with a plan for this time is an investment in slowing down, resting and healing after birth. It's about recognizing that the new parent can't do everything by themselves, and shouldn't have to.

This postpartum plan is designed to help you think about your mental health and wellbeing, support, and resources you may need during this important time in you and your baby's life.



# THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE BABY ARRIVES

## FINANCIAL MATTERS

- What cost will we need to cover?
- How long after birth will parental benefits kick in?
- Does the other parent have paid parental leave?
- What additional expenses will we have?

## NOURISHMENT

- How will we handle meals when baby first arrives?
- Do we have any nutrition needs that need to be addressed?
- Who can we ask for meal support?

## HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT

- What are the current chores that we attend to?
- Who can support us with these chores?

## PARENTING PHILOSOPHY

- How do we see our roles when baby arrives?
- What expectations do we have around baby care?
- What parts of our own childhood do we want to replicate for our child? What do we want to avoid?

## SELF-CARE

- How will you continue to find time for yourselves individually and as a couple?
- What activities are important for me to continue after baby arrives?

## SIBLING SUPPORT

- What are some ways we can include our other child(ren) during this time?
- Who is available to help with our child(ren)?



## **REST IN THE EARLY DAYS**

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During the first few weeks following the birth of a baby, new parents need extra help to help meet individual sleep needs. Each parent should aim for 5 hours of uninterrupted sleep to maintain normal functioning.

You can try these things to help yourself get needed rest:

- You may need to sleep in 2–3 hour blocks at a time, strung together to get the 7-9 hours you need.
- If you cannot get back to sleep after the baby wakes, avoid electronics; read, journal, or listen to meditation instead.
- If it continues to be difficult to get back to sleep after the baby goes to sleep, contact your doctor.
- Take advantage of offers for help or ask friends or family to come over to help with the baby so that you can nap, take a shower or bath, or get some adult interaction.

Support during the night, naps during the day, and tag-team parenting can all be effective tools for meeting important sleep needs. Schedule this type of support for several weeks; identify several names for each time period. Potential sources of help are family members, friends, doulas, and members of religious and/or community groups. Now is the time to strategize on how to fill gaps.

### **PEOPLE AVAILABLE TO HELP DURING THE DAY: (INCLUDE NAMES AND CONTACT INFORMATION)**

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- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### **PEOPLE AVAILABLE TO HELP DURING THE NIGHT: (INCLUDE NAMES AND CONTACT INFORMATION)**

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- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### **PEOPLE AVAILABLE TO HELP DURING THE EVENING HOURS: (INCLUDE NAMES AND CONTACT INFORMATION)**

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- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



## WHERE WILL THE BABY SLEEP?

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- In a crib
- In a bassinet
- Bedsharing
- In our room
- In a separate room

## WHO WILL CARE FOR BABY AT NIGHT?

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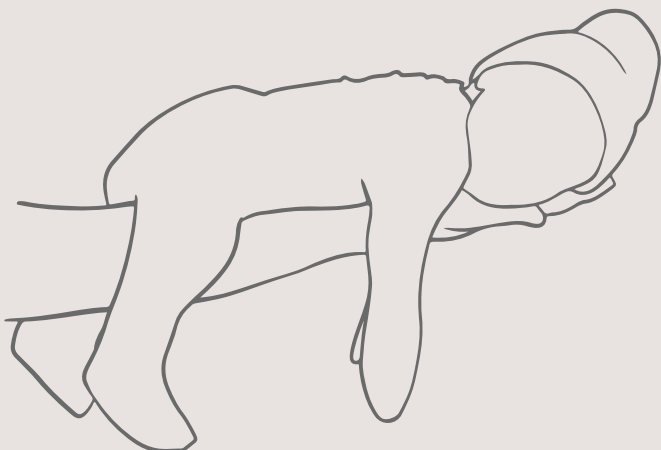
- Birther
- Partner
- Both
- Friend/Family member
- Doula

*Will you and your partner both be getting up at night? (For example, one feeds the baby and afterwards the other burps the baby, changes the baby, puts baby back to sleep?) Or will you take shifts? (For example, Partner 10pm-1am, Mom 1am-5am, Both 5am-10pm)*

## STRATEGIES FOR GETTING SUFFICIENT REST, SLEEP, TIME IN BED

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What do we need individually and together to support our sleep ?



## **NUTRITIOUS MEALS AND ADEQUATE HYDRATION**

achieving even the most basic needs – eating and drinking healthfully – can be challenging when caring for a newborn. Holding, feeding, burping, rocking, changing, and swaddling leave little time to cook. Plan for meals for the immediate postpartum period BEFORE the baby arrives. Prepare meals in advance by “double batching” when cooking in the weeks before the baby arrives.

Identify grocery stores that deliver as well as take-out options.

Ask friends, family members, neighbours, co-workers, and acquaintances through religious affiliations to prepare and deliver meals after the baby arrives. Let people know what type of meals are needed – including things like French toast or pancakes. This will ensure enjoyable meals – and avoid having 15 lasagnas in 3 weeks.

**Plan to have meals prepared and/or delivered for the first \_\_\_\_\_weeks after baby arrives.**

## **NUTRITIOUS MEALS TO PREPARE AND FREEZE BEFORE BABY ARRIVES:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## **GROCERY STORES THAT OFFER ONLINE SHOPPING, TOOLS, PRE-SHOPPING, AND/OR DELIVERY:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## **NUTRITIOUS AND AFFORDABLE TAKE-OUT OR DELIVERY OPTIONS:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



## PEOPLE WHO CAN PREPARE AND DELIVER NUTRITIOUS MEALS AFTER BABY ARRIVES:

MEALTRAIN.COM IS A WEB-BASED TOOL TO SIGNUP PEOPLE TO BRING MEALS

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- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.



### TIPS FOR EATING WELL & STAY HYDRATED

- Have available: protein, vegetables, fruit, whole grain foods.
- Have “grab & go” foods available so that you can eat while you are resting or taking care of the baby.
- Have a cup or bottle of water nearby at all times and drink water frequently



# KNOWLEDGEABLE, EMPOWERING INFANT FEEDING SUPPORT

Feeding a new baby can be a full-time job. The initial days can be especially challenging as parents and baby figure out what works. Feeding choices – nursing, bottle, or both -- do not have to be exclusive, nor do they need to be permanent. Some parents prefer one technique; others choose a hybrid approach -- a combination of nursing, pumping, and formula-feeding – and re-evaluate as necessary. Each baby and each situation is unique. Choose what works best for you, your baby, and your family.

## Bodyfeeding:

Bodyfeeding is a biological process, but it does not always come naturally. Few mothers are blessed with a community of knowledgeable individuals to provide education, support, screening, and guidance on feeding during the time it takes to establish good nursing habits. However, the absence of these important people may lead to difficulties: painful nipples, inadequate milk supply, slow weight gain for baby, fussy babies, and a sense of isolation. These problems do not have to be part of early nursing; appropriate support can prevent most difficulties. Take steps to ensure feeding gets off to a good start: identify and line up support!

## Bottle feeding:

Is also a learned skill and has many aspects, including (but not limited to): what water to use to reconstitute formula, what bottles are best, how to maintain vigilance regarding safety matters, what formula is best, how to ensure correct latch, what holding positions are best, how to time (or not time) feedings, how much to feed, how to store both pumped milk and formula, what methods of making up feeds while traveling are best... and many other aspects which do not even take into account issues that may arise due to individual health, medical, social and emotional matters.

### THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE WILL SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE INFANT FEEDING CHOICES:

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- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### LOCAL BREASTFEEDING RESOURCES WHICH WILL PROVIDE BOTH EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND QUALITY FEEDING SUPPORT INFORMATION. IDENTIFY FEEDING SUPPORT GROUPS, LA LECHE LEAGUE GROUPS, PLACES TO PURCHASE AND/OR RENT BODYFEEDING SUPPLIES SUCH AS NURSING BRAS AND PUMPS

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### LOCAL BOARD CERTIFIED LACTATION CONSULTANTS WHO WILL HELP WITH INFANT FEEDING:

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- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



## **SIBLING SUPPORT**

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Needs of older children: (include allergies, activities/routines you may need help keeping)

People who are available to help spend time with siblings, and keep them on their routines ( drive to activities etc.)

Times of day, rituals, or special activities to share with older children:

Specific strategies to lovingly blend this new baby with the existing family:

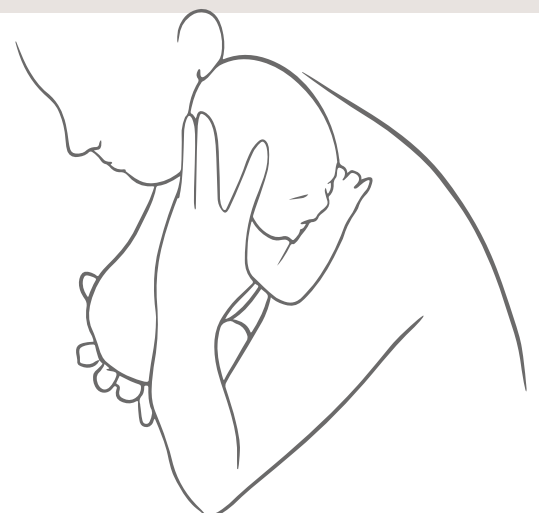
## **FINDING FRIENDS WHO ARE ALSO PARENTS OF YOUNG BABIES**

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Common sense and life experience indicate that having someone who can empathize with experiences normalizes problems and makes them more bearable. Research confirms this concept. These friends will enhance life, rather than replace existing support networks. Identify peers with young babies and strategize on where to find these friends. Suggestions include childbirth education classes, prenatal/ postnatal fitness classes, feeding support groups, common friends, “parents day out” programs, on-line discussion groups, and houses of worship.

## **THE FOLLOWING FRIENDS, NEIGHBOURS, AND COWORKERS HAVE YOUNG BABIES:**

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**PARENTING/HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES: WHO WILL BE DOING THE FOLLOWING?**

**(IT MAY BE ONE OF YOU, BOTH OF YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU HIRE)**

Meal prep

Laundry

Pet care

Dishes

Groceries

Vacuuming

Bathroom

Change the beds

Empty the garbage

Other children's  
schedules

Garbage day

**ANY SPECIAL NEEDS OR ROUTINES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR PET(S)?**

**(FOR EXAMPLE, DIET, MEDICATIONS, ROUTINE/SCHEDULE, ETC.)**



## **RENEWING AND RECHARGING: MAINTAINING A SENSE OF “SELF” AND “US”**

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While the time spent together as a family is priceless, parents also need time to continue their own interests, as well as nurture their relationship as a couple. With a new baby, these things do not always happen easily or spontaneously. Many parents find that occasional time for “me” and “us” helps them to be more loving and better bonded with their baby, and as a family unit as a whole. The tasks below are for both partners to fill out.

### **WHAT CALMS YOU?**

### **WHAT BRINGS YOU JOY? MAKES YOU LAUGH?**

### **WHAT FOOD OR ITEMS BRING YOU COMFORT ?**

### **WHAT ARE WAYS MY PARTNER CAN HELP ME FEEL RECHARGED?**



**RENEWING AND RECHARGING: MAINTAINING A SENSE OF "SELF" AND "US"**

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WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU BOTH ENJOY DOING TOGETHER THAT WILL HELP YOU RECONNECT AS A COUPLE?

IT IS IMPORTANT IN OUR RELATIONSHIP THAT WE:

WHO CAN PROVIDE OCCASIONAL CHILDCARE FOR YOU TO MAKE THESE ACTIVITIES HAPPEN?  
(FRIENDS, FAMILY, CHILDCARE PROFESSIONALS)

NAME:

CONTACT INFO:

WAYS TO GET MOVEMENT AND CONNECT WITH OTHER PEOPLE WHICH I COULD DO WITH A SMALL BABY ARE:



## **MENTAL WELLBEING: JUST IN CASE**

Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs) affect up to 20% of pregnant people and new parents. Partners can experience depression and anxiety disorders too after the baby's birth. This postpartum plan is designed to help you think about your mental health and wellbeing, support, and resources you may need during this important time in your and your baby's life. It is your decision if you wish to share this plan with others.

### **MY EARLY SIGNS THAT I AM FEELING SAD, DEPRESSED OR ANXIOUS:**

**IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO TALK ABOUT NOT DOING WELL. IF YOU FEEL LIKE THIS, WHO WILL YOU TALK TO?**

<b>NAME:</b>	<b>CONTACT INFO:</b>

### **PEOPLE TO CALL LATE AT NIGHT:**

<b>NAME:</b>	<b>CONTACT INFO:</b>

### **WAYS I CAN TALK TO MY PARTNER ABOUT HOW I AM FEELING**



**MENTAL WELLBEING: JUST IN CASE**

**WAYS I CAN GET OUTSIDE AT LEAST ONCE A DAY**

Blank space for writing responses to the question: WAYS I CAN GET OUTSIDE AT LEAST ONCE A DAY

**HEALTHY AND SIMPLE FOODS I CAN EAT**

Blank space for writing responses to the question: HEALTHY AND SIMPLE FOODS I CAN EAT

**WAYS I CAN INCORPORATE MOVEMENT DAILY**

Blank space for writing responses to the question: WAYS I CAN INCORPORATE MOVEMENT DAILY

**APPS, BOOKS OR SHOWS THAT BRING ME COMFORT**

Blank space for writing responses to the question: APPS, BOOKS OR SHOWS THAT BRING ME COMFORT



## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES:

Anxiety and/or depression are the most common complications of childbirth and pregnancy. These illnesses – known as perinatal mood and anxiety disorders -- affect up to 1 in 5 women during pregnancy or the first year after giving birth. Fortunately, these illnesses are temporary and respond well to treatment, which often includes self-care, social support, talk therapy, and medication when needed.

**Postpartum Support International (PSI) ([postpartum.net/](https://www.postpartum.net/))** is a non-profit whose mission is to promote awareness, prevention and treatment of mental health issues related to childbearing in every country worldwide.

For Queer and Trans Parents <https://www.postpartum.net/get-help/queer-parents/>

**PostpartumMen <https://postpartummen.com/>** is a place for men with concerns about depression, anxiety or other problems with mood after the birth of a child. It promotes self-help, provides important information for fathers – including a self-assessment for postpartum depression – hosts an online forum for dads to talk to each other, offers resources, gathers new information about men’s experiences postpartum, and – most importantly – helps fathers to beat the baby blues.

**Pacific Postpartum Society <https://postpartum.org/>** supports anyone who is experiencing isolation, distress, or a PMAD in the perinatal period or is supporting someone who is. This includes pregnant people, new parents, mothers, fathers, partners, non-gestational parents, surrogates, adoptive parents, foster parents, and people who have experienced perinatal or infant loss. We receive over 6000 calls to our support line per year, and that number continues to grow. If you are pregnant, have a child under the age of 3, have recently been pregnant, or have experienced loss, we are available to support you.

<https://www.mommymonitor.ca/> The world’s premiere culturally competent customized maternal health application and services.

