

Our Postpartum Plan

A Planning Guide to Be Completed Before Baby's Arrival

Our Family Members: _____ Baby's Estimated Due Date: _____

SLEEP

Mother's Recovery and Care

New mothers need lots of rest and recovery time as they heal from any type of birth. Whether baby was born vaginally or by Cesarean birth, special healing time needs to be devoted to mother's recovery.



How much sleep do you need when you are not pregnant? _____ hours

This is now your daily goal. While it is not possible to get that much sleep continuously with a newborn, try to get a few naps and sleeping chunks of time in that equal your pre-pregnancy sleep needs. For example, if you need 7 hours of sleep to feel healthy and energized, then maybe you can sleep from midnight-3am (3 hours), 4-6am (2 hours), and take an afternoon nap from 2:00-4:00pm (2 hours). Each day may be different but aim for your goal!

Tip: You may hear the advice, "Sleep when the baby sleeps!" While this might be the ideal situation, many times new moms just cannot sleep at the same time. Try to at least rest with your baby close to you or have someone come over just to sit with the baby while you nap.

PHYSICAL RECOVERY

Your body has gone through a lot of work! Overexerting yourself too much after birth can result in excess bleeding and possible complications. Try to stay in one area of the house during the day. Do not do a lot of lifting and try to sit with your knees together as much as possible. Your postpartum bleeding (called Lochia) is a good indicator of your activity level. If your bleeding increases or is heavy, you need less activity. If you had a Cesarean Birth, please follow all post-operation instructions from your care provider carefully.

I will have the following areas to rest during the day: _____

I will be able to sleep in the following areas at night: _____

I need the following items/conditions to rest well (dark room, my pillow, etc.): _____

Tip: Keep supplies handy in all bathrooms! Pads, underwear, and peri-bottles come in handy!

Tip: You can use disposable diapers as an ice pack! Pull apart the end of the diaper and fill with ice. Then close the top over and sit on the diaper. Dispose of it when it is no longer cold. This is a great way to have something to absorb bleeding AND provide ice comfort at the same time!

NOURISHMENT

Your body needs lots of healthy foods to help you heal from the birth, make great breastmilk, and feel better overall. So many families rely on the partner/spouse to prepare the meals, but it is important that they have time to bond with the baby and get support too. Having meals prepared for you during the first weeks is a great way to have more time with baby and rest!

Our Nourishment will come from:

- Premade Freezer Meals
- Meal Train or similar Meal Delivery Plan (friends, family, etc.)
- Order Food/Take out/Curbside Pick Up from Restaurants
- Postpartum Doula will prepare meals
- Other:

Tip: If someone comes over and offers to help, have them bring or cut up fruit & cheese for you to snack on!

SELF-CARE

Postpartum recovery and caring for a newborn is draining! What are some gentle activities you can do to alleviate stress and boost your mood? Some ideas may include journaling, praying/meditating, going for an easy walk, listening to music, deep breathing, support groups, call a friend, etc.

POSTPARTUM MOOD AND ANXIETY DISORDERS

PSI Helpline: 1-800-944-4773

From Postpartum Support International: A woman with PPD might experience feelings of anger, sadness, irritability, guilt, lack of interest in the baby, changes in eating and sleeping habits, trouble concentrating, thoughts of hopelessness and sometimes even thoughts of harming the baby or herself. Learn more about PPD at www.postpartum.net. If you need local referrals to mental health therapists, please contact me at katie@theiowababylady.com. (Dads/Partners can also experience mental health disorders after the birth of baby too. Please get help from a licensed mental health therapist asap.)

Postpartum Psychosis sufferers sometimes see and hear voices or images that others cannot, called hallucinations. They may believe things that are not true and distrust those around them. They may also have periods of confusion and memory loss and seem manic. This severe condition is dangerous, so it is important to seek help immediately. If you are experiencing symptoms of Postpartum Psychosis, please head directly to the Emergency Room. I recommend Broadlawns or Lutheran because they have mental therapists on staff ready to help.

PARTNER CARE FOR THE NON-BIRTH PARENT

While much of the focus is on the new mom and baby, it is important for you to get your basic needs met as well.

Sleep: How much sleep do you need to feel functional? _____ hours. How are you going to get that much sleep in a 24 hour period?

Nourishment: My meals are being prepared by: _____

Ways I to look forward to play, interact, and bond with my baby: _____

- Skin to Skin
- Changing Diapers
- Baby Exercises like hand clapping
- Reading Books
- Tummy Time
- Babywearing
- Teach Baby to Stick out Tongue
- Bath Time
- Singing a Song
- Bedtime Routine
- Baby Massage



Returning to Work: Are you taking any type of paternity leave? Are you able to work from home? When will you go back to work? _____

New moms sometimes feel overwhelmed when they must care for the baby by themselves, so talk about your expectations ahead of time.

Tip: Stress in the home after the baby's birth is often due to differing opinions on what each other's expectations are. For example, mom might expect dad/partner to be awake during middle-of-the-night feedings while dad/partner expects to be able to sleep through the night since they are working full-time. While neither person is wrong, false expectations can lead to additional stress. Talk about these things ahead of time.

OUR RELATIONSHIP

I expect my partner's role to be:

I expect the new mom's role to be:

It is important to our relationship that we:

Tip! A great book to read before baby comes is *The Five Love Languages* by Steven Chapman. It's a great way to learn more about loving and supporting your partner in ways they will understand! I also recommend *And Baby Makes 3* by John Gottman and *Becoming Us* by Ellie Taylor.

NEWBORN CARE

Your baby has arrived! Congratulations! Make it a point to spend a little time each day just enjoying your new baby by snuggling, skin to skin, bathing, feeding, or whatever activity helps you bond with the baby. Have low expectations about parenting. Remember that both mom and baby are learning how to adapt to this new life situation!

My plan for feeding baby is: Breastfeeding Formula Feeding Combination

My baby feeding areas are: _____

My Lactation Support Person is: _____

We are going to use this diapering method: Cloth Disposable Combination

Babies don't need a lot of "stuff", but having well-stocked diaper areas can reduce stress. Have diapers, wipes, creams, trash bins, and onesies available.

Tip! Some families trade the changing table for having multiple locations to change baby's diapers. Using a thin changing pad on the floor or other surfaces can take the place of a changing table and eliminates the need to carry the baby to the changing table for every diaper change.

Tip! One of the best ways to bond with a baby is doing skin-to-skin care. Place your naked baby on your chest or partner's chest and cover with blankets. Allowing baby to spend time skin-to-skin provides so many calming and neurological benefits for everyone!

HOME CARE

Throw those expectations for a spotless home out the window! Remember the most important part of the first few weeks is allowing the new mom to recover and gain confidence in motherhood. This is more challenging when there is laundry to do, siblings to care for, and meals to prepare. Here is a list of common household tasks that can be delegated to a family member, close friend, and/or postpartum doula.

Meal Preparation:

Laundry:

Grocery Shopping:

General Cleaning (like floors and counters):

Dishes (handwashing, loading/emptying dishwasher):

Tidying Living Spaces:

Floors (vacuuming/sweeping):

Bathroom Cleaning:

SIBLING CARE

Introducing a new baby into a family where there are older siblings can be a mix of joy and stress! As mentioned before, have really low expectations for how the baby/sibling interactions will go. Consider allowing the older child to be as involved or uninvolved as they would like to be. For example, if they are interested in helping dress the baby, allow them to watch or help. Don't be surprised if they exhibit behaviors that aren't typical for them.

What ideas do you have for older child activities while you are feeding the baby? Sometimes having something new or special during that time can help! Puzzles, TV Shows, or tablets/phone games are a few ideas.

What ideas do you have for special time together with your older child? Watch a TV show together, do Play-Doh, or color a picture are a few ideas.

Tip! Children generally don't have a great sense of time. Sometimes doing a quick puzzle or reading a story to them is all they need. Don't feel like you need to do major activities, outings or projects with them.

Who are people you can call to help with baby's older sibling(s)? Family, neighbors, friends, or a postpartum doula are handy numbers to have on hand!

Name	Phone Number

Tip! Talk to these people BEFORE the birth so they know special activities and/or foods your child likes so they are prepared. Will they stay at your home or take the child to their home? Have a bag packed for this child with a change of clothes, diaper/undies, sippy cup, etc. so they are ready if they will be picked up!

PETS

Pets are very similar to older siblings! There are many local resources and books/blogs dedicated to helping your pet adjust to their new role. Write down a few things you want to remember for your pet. You might also want to consider boarding or finding a pet sitter for your pet for the first few days/weeks.

Who will care for your pet(s) during the first few weeks with baby? (Dog walker, cat litter changer, general affection giver) _____

Who will care for your pet(s) during labor and birth? _____

Tip! New toys work for dogs too! Try to find a toy that encourages them to take time. A personal favorite for dogs are Kong toys. Stuff it with all kinds of fun and it will keep your dog busy for hours!

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

	Name	Phone Number
Midwife/OB		
Birth Doula		
Hospital/Birth Center		
Family Support Person		
Family Support Person		
Family Support Person		
Family Support Person		
Pediatrician		
Chiropractor		
Postpartum Doula		
Breastfeeding Support/IBCLC		
Pet Trainer/Care/ Support		
House Cleaner/Lawn Service		
Work Contact/Supervisor/HR		
Work Contact/Supervisor/HR		
Insurance Company		



NOTES

POSTPARTUM DOULAS



This resource was compiled by Katie Nyberg. I'm a local birth & postpartum doula and educator since 2010. I put this guide together to help you prepare for your baby's first few weeks. After the birth of my first son, I suffered with severe postpartum depression. I am from the Des Moines area and have the best local support team anyone could ask for. Yet, because of my own unrealistic expectations of motherhood combined with a difficult birth, I was completely overwhelmed and unconfident in my new role. My husband and family were helpful, but I needed more. This is what led me to offering compassionate, professional postpartum doula care to my business. I know have a team of professional doulas ready to help YOU too!

We offer a variety of postpartum options that are designed to help with all areas in this resource guide. At each visit, we start by asking what the new mom needs most that day and plan our time around that. Typically, a postpartum shift is 3 hours where we help with mother care, newborn care, other parent & sibling support, and light housekeeping. Most families have us come 2-3 times per week. We are very flexible for meeting your family's needs, and would love to meet with you for a free postpartum doula consultation! Contact us using the info below!

Best wishes as you prepare for labor, birth, and parenthood!

For extra support, contact Katie Nyberg at katie@theiowababylady.com (515) 473-2737

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