



Realistic Postpartum Plan for the _____ Family.

Plan for Adjusting to Life with a New Born Baby

TOPICS

1. Rest
2. Meals
3. Infant Feeding
4. Older Siblings
5. Renew and Recharge
6. Findings Friends
7. Mental Health
8. Returning to “Normal”

USING THE PLAN

The plan is intended as a starting point for discussions about how families will adjust to life with a new baby.

The goal of the plan is to help parents identify resources BEFORE they are needed, thereby reducing stress and easing the transition period.

1. Rest in the early days

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. 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.

Names and Contact

Information

People available to help during the day:	1. 2. 3.
People available to help during the night:	1. 2. 3.
People available to help during the evening hours- especially important if the family has older siblings:	1. 2. 3.
People available to “ move in ” to provide extra support:	1. 2. 3.
Strategies to help get sufficient sleep:	1. 2. 3.

For more resources visit:

Restful Parenting who are sleep consultants and offer both sleep and parenting support. They have extensive knowledge of little people and how they function, to create a sleep program that is flexible and individualized to the family and especially the child. Although they focus on sleep, they offer parenting support to help with tantrums/setting limits, healthy eating, toilet training, preparing for childcare and other challenges you may face as a parent. Please visit <https://restfulparenting.com/> for more information. Videos, tips and tricks are also offered on the website.

How to have a restful time with your baby – Youtube video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aqqq-9UcH8>

2. 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 baby arrives. Prepare meals in advance by “double batching” when cooking in the weeks before baby arrives. Identify grocery stores that deliver as well as take-out options. Ask friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers, and acquaintances through religious affiliations to prepare and deliver meals after 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:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.
Grocery stores that offer online shopping, tools, pre-shopping, and/or delivery:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.
Nutritious and affordable take-out or delivery options:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.
People who can prepare and deliver nutritious meals after baby arrives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.

For more resources visit:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-ng-nutrition-for-the-breastfeeding-mother.pdf>

3. 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 – breast, 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 breastfeeding, pumping, and formula-feeding – and re-evaluate as necessary.

Each baby and each situation are unique. Choose what works best for you, your baby, and your family.

Breastfeeding is a natural process, but it does not always come naturally. Few mothers are blessed with a community of knowledgeable women to provide education, support, screening, and guidance on breastfeeding during the time it takes to establish good breastfeeding habits. However, the absence of these important people may lead to breastfeeding 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 breastfeeding; 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 are excellent websites with information about infant feeding:

- Formula and bottle-feeding information: Bottle Babies, bottlebabies.org
- Breastfeeding questions and answers: Beautifully bonded lactation

The following friends and relative will support and encourage infant feeding support choices:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.
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The following people are supportive, informed and up-to-date about infant feeding choices, can answer questions, and will make helpful recommendations:	1. 2. 3.
Local postpartum doulas who will visit and help with infant feeding. https://www.myvillagedoulas.com/	1. 2. 3.
Local board-certified lactation consultants who will help with infant feeding: Beautifully Bonded breastfeeding & lactation support	1. 2. 3.
Local breastfeeding resources which will provide both emotional support and quality breastfeeding support information: Laugh Latch and Learn North Bay Facebook page (private group, must ask to join group)	1. 2. 3.

For more resources visit: <https://www.myhealthunit.ca/en/health-topics/breastfeeding.asp>

Beautifully Bonded is a breastfeeding and lactation support in North Bay. For more inquires visit their Facebook/Instagram page under beautifully bonded or email BeautifullyBondedLactation@gmail.com.

4. Support for older siblings

Older children will experience a time of transition following the birth of a baby. Welcoming the baby with love and maintaining a loving, nurturing relationship with older children is the goal of all parents. Planning ahead to ensure that older children have time to welcome their new sibling but still have special time with their parents is an important step in ensuring a smooth transition.

Names and contact information if applicable

People who can care for older children when mother goes into labour:	1. 2. 3.
Needs of older children:	1. 2. 3.
People who will be able to spend quality time with older children, as well as drive them to school, daycare and activities:	1. 2. 3.
Times of day, rituals, or special activities to share with older children:	1. 2. 3.
Specific strategies to lovingly blend this new baby with the existing family:	1. 2. 3.

For more resources visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/1FamilyEnrichmentProgram/>

5. Renewing and recharging: maintaining a sense of “self” and “us”

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.

Loving, responsible friends and family who will provide occasional childcare: (Include names and contact information)	1. 2. 3.
Loving, responsible professional childcare providers: (Include names and contact information)	1. 2. 3.
Activities and “breathers” for mother’s rest, renewal, and re-energizing:	1. 2. 3.
Activities and “breathers” for partner’s rest, renewal, and re-energizing:	1. 2. 3.
Activities and “breathers” for connecting as a couple:	1. 2. 3.

6. Finding friends who are also parents of young babies

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, breastfeeding support groups, common friends, “mommy’s day out” programs, on-line discussion groups, and houses of worship.

The following friends, neighbors, and coworkers have young babies:	1. 2. 3.
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Strategies for building a support network of friends who also have babies includes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.
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Resources:

EarlyON / ON y va is an interactive program for children and their families, from birth to six years of age. Early Years programs play an important role in supporting children's learning, development, health and well-being. Children succeed in programs that focus on active learning through exploration, play and inquiry. Children thrive in programs where they and their families are valued as active participants and contributors. All our programs are free.

Blossom early learning provides classes where you and your child can enjoy hands-on activities, songs, music, dancing, games and build friendships with other children and parents. You will learn about your child's development and how the play-based activities support your child's learning. Classes by Blossom have been purposely designed to meet developmental milestones of children at specific ages. The goal of the activities and experiences in the developmental classes (Snuggle, Cuddle, Flutter) are for children to master certain skills so that they have a solid foundation before moving to the next milestone skill. Other classes like Bumble Bugs, Busy Bees, Chute Bugs, Jingle Bugs, Kinder Bugs and more, are classes that help build skills like listening, language, self-regulation and other key skills for successful entry into kindergarten

One Kids Place is a huge supporter of community and looks forward to many more years of enhancing the lives of children and their families. Together with families and partners, we help make a difference in the lives of children and youth with special needs in the Districts of Muskoka, Nipissing, and Parry Sound. Through the delivery of inter-disciplinary supports, services, and therapy, our expert team of professionals empower every kid to reach their full potential and create a place of belonging in our community.

7. Mental health: it is of the highest importance

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/) is a non-profit whose mission is to promote awareness, prevention and treatment of mental health issues related to childbearing in every country worldwide.

There are also virtual communities available for both mothers and fathers:

Postpartum Men (postpartummen.com/) is aimed at helping families overcoming postpartum depression by providing firsthand information and guidance through the experience of postpartum depression.

Postpartum Progress (postpartumprogress.com/) is the most widely-read blog in the United States addressing postpartum mood disorders.

PPD Online Support Page is an online group offering information, advice, and assistance to those dealing with postpartum mood disorders, their families, friends, physicians, and counselors.

Postpartum Support International (postpartum.net/Resources/PSI-Chat-with-an-Expert.aspx) hosts free, live phone sessions every week, including Wednesday chats for moms and first Monday of month chats for dads. During these sessions you can connect with other moms and dads, and talk with a PSI expert about resources, symptoms, options and general information about perinatal mood and anxiety disorders from the privacy of your own phone. There is no need to pre-register or give your name. These sessions, facilitated by licensed mental health professionals, are informational only and open to anyone with questions and concerns. Limited to the first 15 callers. Go here to learn more:
postpartum.net/Resources/PSI-Chat-with-an-Expert.aspx

Talking with other women who have survived postpartum depression can be extremely helpful. Support groups offer the opportunity to validate experiences, share coping strategies, and gain support and encouragement. Several support groups are active throughout Ontario and Canada.

Medical professionals also play an important role in assisting women with postpartum depression. New mothers can talk with an obstetrician, gynecologist, family practitioner, or primary care provider. These doctors can help rule out underlying medical conditions – such as thyroid changes and anemia – that can occur following pregnancy. Mental health professionals can assist with counseling and medication when necessary. Pediatricians can also provide information about postpartum depression.

- I have talked with my OB, midwife, and doula about the baby blues.
- I have talked with my OB, midwife, and doula about perinatal mood and anxiety disorders.
- I have talked with my partner about perinatal mood and anxiety disorders.
- I have permission to be aware of mood changes after childbirth and ask for help if I need it.

People who will provide a comforting voice or shoulder to cry on: (Include names and contact information)	1. 2. 3.
People to call late at night: (Include names and contact information)	1. 2. 3.
Local support groups: (Group name, meeting place and time)	1. 2. 3.
Knowledgeable, professional mental health providers:	1. 2. 3.

For more information visit: <https://www.myhealthunit.ca/en/health-topics/postpartum-mood-disorders.asp>

Returning to “normal”

When is partner returning to work? Many families find that the transition to life with a new baby is easier if both parents are at home for a period of time, especially if the family includes older siblings. If both parents cannot be at home, perhaps a grandparent or other relative can provide support. However, each family is unique; identify what works best for you and your family.

If you are returning to work: When are you planning on returning to work? Is it realistic considering sleep deprivation of about 3 months and healing of 4 – 6 weeks? Is this plan flexible if something changes?

What are childcare, babysitter, and daycare options ? Seek a high level of comfort about the person or people taking care of baby. Spend time with childcare providers in one or two hour	1. 2. 3.
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chunks with baby and/or older children.	
What is the plan for housekeeping and chores ?	1. 2. 3.
What is/are mom's concern(s) about this transition?	1. 2. 3.
What is/are partner's greatest concern(s) about this transition in our family?	1. 2. 3.

Resources:

For childcare subsidy information visit:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/child-care-subsidies>

Day care waiting lists: <https://dnssab.ca/childrens-services/how-to-apply/>

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to you and your immediate family members 24 hours a day, 7 days a week if you are in distress or need mental health support. For more information about EAP visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/environmental-workplace-health/occupational-health-safety/employee-assistance-services/employee-assistance-program.html>