

POSTPARTUM WELLNESS WORKBOOK

A guide for the care of new mothers



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INTRODUCTION

New mothers have about 9 months to prepare for their new baby, and with it a new life. How do we typically prepare? Setting up the nursery, making sure we have enough clothes, diapers, wipes and other baby supplies. We prepare for the birth itself, doing things such as taking a childbirth education class, getting our body ready by drinking raspberry leaf tea and doing squats, and packing a hospital bag. How often do we really prepare for the postpartum time after the baby arrives?

The postpartum period is technically one year after giving birth. In our society, many women are expected to be “back to normal” at six weeks, sometimes sooner. In my opinion, this amount of time is far too short. New mothers are being pressured to go back to work, look like their “old self” and take care of their household long before they are truly physically and emotionally healed after childbirth. In other cultures, six weeks is the approximate amount of time that new mothers spend in the home, often in bed, being taken care of by their community so that they can recover and spend time caring for their new baby. This practice truly embodies the phrase “it takes a village.”

Postpartum mood and anxiety disorders are far more prominent than we might think. The reason for this could be, in addition to hormone fluctuations and drastic life changes, the fact that new mothers aren’t nearly as educated on and supported during the postpartum time.

My inspiration in teaching about postpartum wellness is my own lack of preparation after my first birth. I was beyond prepared for giving birth naturally at home. I put all my extra time and energy into preparing the birth space, creating affirmation flags, educating myself on the entire birth process and doing hypobirthing meditations. All of this preparation was well worth it. I had a wonderful birth experience. However, the next year was a bit of a roller coaster for me. I had no idea how to care for a newborn, had difficulty accepting my new body, experienced new health challenges post birth, and I struggled with postpartum depression until my son was over one year old. At the time of writing this, I am six months pregnant and have decided to create a detailed postpartum plan to make this time one that is magical and can be focused on bonding with my new baby, not a stressful year full of worry and anxiety. I hope this can help you too.

THIRD TRIMESTER TO-DO LIST

- ☐ Hire postpartum doula
- ☐ Hire placenta encapsulator
- ☐ Set up sacred space
- ☐ Prepare freezer meals and snacks
- ☐ Buy pantry items
- ☐ Appoint support people
- ☐ Gather items for scar healing
- ☐ Gather items for comfort
- ☐ Gather items for baby
- ☐ Create a postpartum communication plan with your partner

BIRTH HEALING

Whether you gave birth vaginally or had a c-section, your body goes through a lot! After over 9 months of growing a baby then giving birth, you need plenty of time to recover. The best thing you can do for yourself is REST for as long as you need to. It is recommended that the first five days postpartum are spent in the bed and the next five days should be spent around the bed. The best thing for long term recovery is to take it as easy as possible for the first six weeks after giving birth.

If you are recovering from a c-section, there are some other healing measures you will want to keep in mind:

- It usually takes longer than the usual "six weeks" for your incision to heal completely
- Shortly after the surgery, you will want to move or walk with the help of your partner or a nurse
- Everyday you should move or walk a little more than the previous day (but make sure not to over exert yourself)
- Gas pains are common after having a c-section due to air that enters the abdominal region during surgery. If the gas pain is severe, you may want to consider gas medication.
- Which pain medications to take differs depending on the person, how they are feeling, if they are eating, etc. Use whatever is best for you and what you are comfortable with
- You may experience discomfort around the incision if you cough or sneeze after surgery, holding a pillow or blanket on this area may help

BIRTH HEALING SUPPLIES

Tears

- Peri bottle
- Witch hazel
- Pads/Depends
- Manuka honey
- Arnica
- Sitz Bath
- Padsicles
- Tucks
- Dermoplast

C-Section

- Pain relief
- High-waisted underwear
- Abdominal Band
- Pads
- Stool softeners
- Ice packs
- Gas relief

Supplies for Baby

- Clean clothing in sizes newborn + 0-3
- Clean swaddles
- White noise machine
- Unscented, baby-safe laundry detergent
- Humidifier
- Nose Frida
- Baby wearing gear
- Safe place to set down baby
- Changing station

BIRTH HEALING SUPPLIES

Comfrey Sitz Bath Recipe

from The First Forty Days

Most midwives and many obstetricians will talk to you about sitz baths - a remedy for soothing the tender area around the perineum that involves sitting in shallow, warm water infused with skin-soothing herbs. You can purchase ready-made blends of herbs, but it's very easy to make your own. Comfrey and calendula are renowned for their skin-healing properties and lavender soothes. You can use this "body infusion" blend in three ways: as a sitz bath, for making frozen maxi pads to reduce swelling, and to fill a peri bottle to gently cleanse the entire area between the legs, especially after going to the bathroom.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup comfrey leaves

1/2 cup dried lavender

1/2 cup calendula blossoms

8 overnight maxi pads (optional)

Instructions:

In a medium pot, bring 6 cups water to a boil. Add the comfrey, lavender, and calendula, remove from heat, and let steep for 20 minutes, covered.

Strain the tea water, then use it in a sitz bath, transfer to a peri bottle, or dip the maxi pads into the tea, one by one. Twist each pad gently to wring out the excess, then place them, one next to the other, on a baking sheet and put the pan in the freezer. When the pads are frozen, stack them in a zip-tight plastic bag and return them to the freezer until after your delivery. To reduce swelling in the first two to three days after birth, you can sit on a frozen pad for 7 to 10 minutes at a time.

Mountain Rose Herbs (mountainroseherbs.com) is a great online store where you can buy certified-organic teas, herbs and spices

BREASTFEEDING

In the weeks after giving birth, most of your time will be spent breastfeeding. There is a learning curve for both you and your baby that requires time, patience, practice and support. Here are some things you can do and items to have on hand to help you ease into breastfeeding your baby.

Tips

- Set up a comfortable, calm space where you will enjoy sitting for long periods of time with your baby.
- Your body should be completely supported and comfortable, propping yourself up with pillows helps with this.
- Make sure to keep your nipples dry to avoid thrush. This includes letting them air out after feedings and making sure to change dry pads often.
- Feed on demand. This helps to keep up your supply to keep up with what your baby needs.
- Apply nipple cream often. This can help with dry, chapped nipples and avoid cracking.

Items

- Boppy or other breastfeeding pillow
- Nipple cream/balm
- Dry pads (reusable or disposable)
- Grapefruitseed oil
- Nursing bras and/or tanks
- Robe
- Button down shirts
- Haaka or other milk catcher
- Pump (manual or electronic)
- Refillable water bottles

SACRED SPACE

In the early postpartum days, you will be sitting (a lot!) with your baby, whether you are breastfeeding or they are sleeping in your arms. It may feel mentally difficult, but you should be sitting this much. Remember - you need to rest in order to recover. You will be spending a lot of time here, so it's important to make sure you pick a spot that is comfortable, calm and is stocked with necessary items for breastfeeding and entertainment.

- First, choose a place. Would you rather spend most of your time in your living room, where you might be closer to the kitchen or other family members, or your bedroom, where you can be closer to your bed (you can also temporarily put a chair in your bedroom if you have the space).
- Place a table with a basket or small set of drawers next to wherever you plan to be sitting. There are certain items you want to keep within an arms reach at all times:
 - water
 - snacks
 - book/kindle
 - journal and pen
 - phone and charger
 - tv remote
 - nipple/breast care supplies

SACRED SPACE

- You want to make sure that you will be physically comfortable in your space. If you are breastfeeding, a chair that is comfortable but supportive is best. Some things you may want to include are:
 - pillows for propping up yourself and your baby for ideal positioning for breastfeeding (you want to be sitting in an upright position and if you can prop your baby on a pillow, you can have one or both hands free)
 - breastfeeding pillow, which is great not only for breastfeeding, but as a place to rest your baby. It can be especially helpful while healing from a c-section and want to protect your scar
 - footrest or ottoman
 - a fluffy couch or bed may seem enticing, but it may not feel comfortable long term. However, if you prefer a side-lying position for feeding your baby, having a bed nearby is helpful.
- Your space should be as calm and restful as possible. I recommend journaling before giving birth on what helps you feel calm. Is it important for the space to be clean and minimal? Are there certain colors that make you feel calm and others that make you anxious? Take this into consideration when choosing and setting up your sacred space. Some things you may want to include:
 - lavender essential oil
 - crystals (I love moonstone and rose quartz for new moms)
 - angel cards with positive messages
 - photos of loved ones or a place in nature you love

PELVIC FLOOR & CORE

Pushing too hard and trying to get back into your old exercise routine too quickly can severely impact the healing of your core and pelvic floor. Weakness and separation of abdominals are NORMAL; it happens because your body making room for baby. However, if separation is still viable 8 weeks after birth, this is not normal and you should seek help.

Tips to Support your Core

- Practice 5 minutes of deep breathing daily thinking about how you are breathing with mindfulness of the pelvic floor, abdominals and diaphragm (helps core and pelvic floor)
- Allow recovery time. Do not expect your body to “bounce back” right away
- Even when you are cleared for exercise, do not jump back in too fast or intensely, as this can cause injury. Take it slow. You will need to re-build.
- Get a personalized consult with a pelvic floor physical therapist during pregnancy and after delivery
- Get a squatty potty or stool to help with moving bowels and prevent excess straining.

Seek help from a pelvic floor physical therapist if you experience...

- Leakage of urine or feces when you laugh, sneeze or exercise
- Excessive urinary urgency or frequency
- Pain or pressure in your pelvic, pelvic floor or lower back
- Sensation of heaviness or something is falling out of the vagina
- Pain or discomfort during intercourse
- Diastasis Recti - separation of the abdominal wall

FOOD & NOURISHMENT

It is of utmost importance for a new mother to be well nourished during postpartum. Not only is healthy, nutrient dense food essential for physical healing, keeping the mother well fed helps her mentally and emotionally while caring for a newborn and herself. Keep these guidelines in mind when choosing meals for your postpartum time:

Warm

According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, mothers lose a lot of heat during the birthing process and need to rebuild the balance of warmth in their bodies. In order to do this, we should consume broths, teas, warm water with lemon, soups and stews and warming herbs and spices.

Easy to Digest

Pregnancy and childbirth put a lot of stress on your organs, so your body needs to focus on repairing, not digesting. Start off by consuming broth, soup and tea, and meat, vegetables and whole grains that are braised and slow cooked. As time goes on, you may add more sustenance to your meals. Foods that are difficult to digest and should be limited or avoided include: raw salads and vegetables, cold smoothies, ice cream and other cold desserts, heavy meat (ex: grilled steak), processed oils and low fat or sweetened dairy.

FOOD & NOURISHMENT

Nutrient Dense

Nutrient dense foods help your body heal postpartum, maintain milk supply and keep mom mentally and emotionally stable.

Fats supply the body with sustaining, usable energy, balance hormones, support mood and enrich breastmilk, helping baby's brain development

- Grass-fed butter and ghee
- Oily fish
- Full fat dairy
- Avocado and avocado oil
- Coconut oil, coconut butter and coconut milk
- Other oils, like olive and sesame

Protein helps to keep you full, supports muscle and tissue repair.

Collagen helps with healing tears and scars.

- Grass-fed meat
- Pasture-raised poultry and eggs
- Bone broth
- Wild fish
- Lentils and beans

Dairy should be organic and grass-fed. Raw is best because it provides enzymes and can be easier to digest.

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Kefir
- Cheese
- Butter

FOOD & NOURISHMENT

Nutrient Dense

Vegetables and **Fruit** provide vitamins and minerals, boost the immune system and reduce inflammation. Vegetables are best digested when cooked. Fruit can be consumed fresh, dried or stewed.

- Greens (spinach, kale, collards, swiss chard, arugula)
- Root and other starchy vegetables (potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, squash, carrots, parsnips)
- Onions and garlic
- Mushrooms
- Cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts)
- Fermented vegetables (sauerkraut, kimchee)
- Fruit (apples, pears, bananas, berries, tomatoes, avocado, prunes, red dates)

Nuts are a good source of protein and fat, and are best consumed raw, dry roasted or as a nut butter (just make sure there is no added sugar or oils).

- Almonds, cashews, walnuts, pistachios, hazelnuts, pecans, macadamia

Seeds provide fiber, which can help with constipation. They are great additions to smoothies, oatmeal and macro bowls.

- Chia, flax, hemp, pumpkin, sesame

Grains are a great source of fiber, just make sure you're eating them in their whole form.

- Rice, quinoa, oats, polenta, millet, amaranth, farro

Beans, which also provide fiber, are also a great source of protein

- Lentils, chickpeas, adzuki, kidney, pinto

Grains and beans are both best digested when they are soaked before cooking

FOOD & NOURISHMENT

Pantry Items to Have on Hand

- Canned salmon and sardines
- Nuts and trail mix
- Nut Butters
- Grains
- Seeds
- Teas
- Herbs and spices
- Collagen peptides
- Maple syrup and/or honey

Easy to Make

- Hard boiled eggs
- Smoothies
- Greens (massaged kale salad)
- Whole grains (rice, quinoa, oats)
- Roasted or steamed vegetables
- Baked sweet potatoes
- Crock pot shredded chicken

Freezer Meals and Make Ahead Snacks

- Broths, soups, stews
- Lactation cookies/bites
- Casseroles
- Homemade granola and trail mix

Pick Up and Delivery Grocery Options

- Butcher Box
- Nourishing Long Island
- Join a local CSA
- Misfits Market
- Thrive Market
- Costco
- Whole Foods
- Pea Pod
- Insta Cart
- Amazon

RECIPES

Bone Broth

This is a perfect warm beverage to sip on during postpartum. It can also be used as a base for any soup. Bone broth is easy to digest and provides collagen, which can help with healing after giving birth. You can make a big batch and freeze before baby arrives.

Save the bones from a roasted chicken, or purchase from a local butcher or farm (bonus points if you can get feet and/or a head). Place the bones in a large stock pot with one onion, a few carrots (unpeeled and roughly chopped is fine) and a tablespoon of apple cider vinegar. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a low simmer and cover. Cook for at least 12 hours. The amount of liquid should reduce to about 1/2, and yields about 6-8 cups of broth. Strain and then use or store in the refrigerator or freezer.

Easy Vegetable Soup

Put a medium size pot or dutch oven over medium heat, add 1-2 Tbs avocado oil. Add 1/2 chopped onion and 1 clove minced garlic and cook until soft (about 2 minutes). Add chopped vegetables of choice (I love to use carrots, zucchini, celery) and cook for 5 more minutes. Add bone broth to the pot and let simmer until vegetables are cooked to your liking. At the end you can add shredded chicken, cooked rice, a handful of spinach.

RECIPES

Favorite Postpartum Teas

- Chamomile
- Nettles
- Fennel
- Ginger
- Red Raspberry
Leaf
- Roasted
Dandelion
- Rooibos

You Rock! Mama Tea & Infusion

from MidwiferyToday.com

- 2 parts chamomile flower (*Matricaria recutita*)
- 2 parts hibiscus flower (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*)
- 1 part rose petal (*Rosa* spp.)
- 1/8 part lavender flower (*Lavendula officinalis*)
- 1/4 part rose hips (*Rosa canina*)
- 3 parts lemon balm leaf (*Melissa officinalis*)

Make this by the gallon. It is rich in nervines, vitamins and minerals. Mom, family and care providers can drink this throughout the day, hot or cold.

RECIPES

Golden Milk by Ciara Shea of Ora Nutrition

This drink aids in digestion, has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, provides healthy fat, and supports brain & joint health.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup coconut milk (or sub with almond or hemp milk)
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp tumeric
- 3 twists ground black pepper

Instructions

Bring milk to a simmer. Once warm, add to a blender with remaining ingredients and blend until combined.

Green Smoothie

Smoothies are a great way to pack a lot of nutrients into your day in one meal. They are best served warm while in the postpartum phase. If you prefer frozen ingredients, drink alongside tea to balance out the coldness.

Ingredients (for 1 smoothie)

- 1 cup coconut or almond milk
- 1/3 avocado
- 1 Tbs almond butter
- 1 Tbs flax seeds
- 1/2 banana
- 1/4 cup blueberries
- 1-2 handfuls spinach
- 1 Tbs collagen peptides (optional)

Instructions

Blend everything in a blender until smooth. You may adjust the liquid amount depending on how thick you like it. Pour into a glass and enjoy!

RECIPES

Lactation Cookies

Ingredients

- 2 cups oats
- 1 cup flour of choice (almond, cassava for gf options)
- 2 Tbs Brewer's yeast
- 2 Tbs chia seeds
- 2 Tbs flax seeds
- 2 Tbs hemp seeds
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- pinch sea salt
- 6 Tbs grass-fed butter (or coconut oil)
- 1/2 cup sweetener, maple syrup or honey
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup add ins (chocolate chips, nuts, raisins)

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 350F and line two cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a large bowl, combine all dry ingredients. In a medium size bowl, whisk the wet ingredients. Add the wet to the dry ingredients and stir until combined. Fold in the chocolate chips or other add ins. Using a spoon, scoop about a tablespoon of dough and pat into a cookie shape on the sheet. Bake for about 10 minutes.

RECIPES

Homemade Granola

Make this granola right before the baby comes for an easy to grab snack. It is delicious over full fat yogurt or with almond milk and sliced banana.

Ingredients

- 2 cups rolled oats
- 1/2 cup chopped almonds
- 1/4 cup shredded coconut
- 1/4 cup chia seeds
- 1/4 cup sunflower seeds
- 2 Tbs hemp seeds
- 2 Tbs cacao powder
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1/2 cup coconut oil, melted
- 1/2 cup peanut butter (or other nut butter)
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1/2 tsp vanilla
- 1/4 cup chocolate chips (optional)

Instructions

Preheat oven to 300 and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. In a large bowl, mix all of the dry ingredients. In a smaller bowl, whisk the wet ingredients. Add the wet mixture to the dry and combine. Pour onto the baking sheet and spread in a thin, even layer. Bake in the oven for 30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes. Let cool for 10-15 minutes. Stir in chocolate chips. Store in a big glass jar.

Instant Pot Shredded Chicken

This chicken is great to have on hand to add to macro bowls and make tacos with throughout the week and it's super easy to make! If you don't have an Instant Pot, you can use the same ingredients and cook in a crock pot.

Ingredients

- 2 lbs boneless chicken thighs (sub with breasts or use a combo)
- 1 jar salsa (sub with bone broth)

Instructions

Pat chicken dry and season with salt and pepper. Place in the Instant Pot and cover with salsa or broth. Set Instant Pot on manual/pressure cook setting for 18 minutes. When 18 minutes is up, let it sit for 10 minutes, then release pressure. Take out the chicken and shred with two forks, then mix back in with the remaining sauce. Enjoy right away or store in the fridge for 5 days.

Tip: Did you know that you can cook an entire chicken in a crock pot? Simply season (I like to use butter, salt, pepper and lemon) and place in the crock pot on 3-4 rolled up pieces of tin foil so it can evenly cook. Let it cook on low for 6-8 hours or on high for 4-5 hours. If you like crispy skin, simply put the chicken under the broiler for 4-5 minutes when it's done. After you eat the chicken, you can use the carcass to make broth!

RECIPES

Nourishing Macro Bowl

This isn't really a recipe, just an easy, delicious way to throw together a nutrient dense meal in minutes. Choose 1-2 items from each category to customize your own bowl in a matter of minutes! This only requires a little prep in the beginning of the week (maybe when your partner is home on a Sunday or your sister can come over to watch the baby).

Grains (choose 1) - rice, quinoa, amaranth, farro, millet, oats, polenta, barley (you may also sub with any greens or a starchy vegetable, like roasted sweet potato)

Vegetable (choose 2, at least one cooked) - carrots, potatoes, broccoli, asparagus, squash, onions, kale, whatever is in season

Protein (choose 1) - eggs, fish, chicken, beef, beans, lentils

Fat - (choose 1-2) avocado, olive oil, olives melted butter, tahini

Toppings - seeds (sesame, flax, hemp, sunflower), nuts, sauerkraut, nutritional yeast, coconut aminos or tamari, any herbs or spices

POSTPARTUM NUTRITION PLAN

Favorite snacks to always have on hand

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Quick meals I know I can put together easily

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Freezer meals to make before baby comes

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Meals to ask family and friends to make for me

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Favorite restaurants for take-out

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

SELF-CARE

Relaxation and self-care are essential for healing in the several weeks to months postpartum. Postpartum mood and anxiety disorder are much more common than we think, and it often goes undetected, so taking preventative measures to make sure you feel supported and mentally stable is extremely important. It does take some planning ahead of time to ensure that you a) know how you will best be able to do this and b) your family and friends can know how to best support you. Take some time to read and answer the provided questions over the next several pages and share with the people closest to you.

Three things that help me relax

- _____
- _____
- _____

How can I make sure I fit at least one of these relaxation techniques into my routine? _____

Might there be any obstacles to resting for me?

How can I address these obstacles?

How can I ensure that I can get a nap in during the day if I need it?

MOOD BOOSTING PRACTICES

- Avoid excess phone and computer use
- Talk therapy
- Have a go-to person (friend or family member) you can talk to
 - Someone for baby advice
 - Someone who is a good listener
- Keep pressure on yourself low
- Avoid comparison traps
- Stay fed with nourishing food
- Go outside (or open windows)
- Get help: childcare, cooking, cleaning
- Get a massage or manicure/pedicure
- Diffuse essential oils (lavender is baby-safe)
- Yoga and stretching (depending on readiness)
- Meditate
- Breathing Exercises
- Go for a walk
- Go on a date with your partner (you can bring your baby!)
- Take a nap

SUPPORT SYSTEM

Personal

- Partner
- Mom/mother in law
- Sister/sister in law
- Friends
- Older children
- Other family members

Hired Help

- Postpartum Doula
- Lactation Consultant
- Placenta Encapsulator
- Baby Nurse
- Baby Sitter
- House Cleaner
- Laundry Service
- Therapist

Who am I going to go for help?

Cooking meals _____

Dishes _____

Laundry _____

Sibling Care _____

Help care for baby _____

Advice _____

Breastfeeding help _____

Just to talk _____

Tell my birth story _____

Other _____

PARTNER COMMUNICATION

Life with your partner as you know it will be extremely different after having a baby. It can be incredibly challenging to make time for each other when there is another little person in the mix. You may feel unsupported and your partner may start to feel uninvolved or left out. With a newborn often comes stress, so being proactive about reducing stress in your relationship can help you immensely.

The best thing you can do for your relationship is to communicate. This communication should start before the baby is born. Use this guide to help you and your partner get on the same page and stay connected.

Take [The 5 Love Languages Quiz](#)

My love language _____

My partner's love language _____

How I deal with stress _____

How my partner deals with stress _____

How can I support my partner deal with stress

How can they support me deal with stress

Weekly check-in day _____ and time _____

PARTNER COMMUNICATION

Sometimes it's difficult to express to our loved ones what we really need. Check off any items that will help you feel supported and share it with your partner.

How I will feel most supported

- Change the baby's diapers
- Help with other baby care
- Protect my boundaries with visitors
- Clean the house
- Do the laundry
- Make me dinner
- Make sure I am well fed
- Tell me you love me
- Make sure my water bottle is always filled
- Give me a massage
- Offer to take the baby so I can shower
- Buy me flowers
- Plan a date when I am ready to leave the baby
- Do not judge my parenting
- Take control of care for older children
- Tell me I'm beautiful
- Wash dishes
- Other _____

ENTERTAINMENT

Is there a show you've been dying to watch but haven't had the time? Or you know you have difficulty relaxing and spending time on the couch? Plan for what you will do with your free time now so you don't have to make decisions later.

Books

- The First Forty Days
- The Fourth Trimester
- The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding
- _____
- _____
- _____

TV/Movies

- Working Moms
- What to Expect When You're Expecting
- _____
- _____

Podcasts

- The Badass Breastfeeding Podcast
- The Motherly Podcast
- Postpartum Stories
- _____
- _____

JOURNAL PROMPTS

Journaling can be a great activity to do when you are feeling overwhelmed, defeated, or even while just sitting on the couch with your baby. It can help to get your thoughts in order or to boost your mood and gain perspective on difficult situations. You can free write or use any of these prompts for inspiration.

- Tell your birth story. What surprised you? What was the hardest part?
- A piece of parenting advice that has helped me the most
- A piece of advice I would give to a new mom
- Things that help me feel most relaxed
- Things that help me feel most energized
- What has surprised me the most about motherhood
- What has been the hardest part about motherhood
- Things I love most about my spouse
- The nicest thing someone has done to help me postpartum
- What makes me feel the most cared for
- How I want my home to feel
- What brings me joy?

MEDITATION AND BREATHING EXERCISES

Meditation and breathing exercises can be incredibly helpful relaxation techniques. Just a few minutes of deep breathing can instantly bring your nervous system from being in "fight or flight" mode to a relaxed state.

It's very easy to spend hours scrolling through your phone while feeding your baby. While this isn't necessarily a bad thing, it can inadvertently cause a lot of anxiety (comparing yourself to other moms, seeing what you're missing out on while you're spending so much time at home, etc).

It's also easy to say "I have no time to meditate - I'm taking care of a baby all day! When am I supposed to find a moment to close my eyes and get into a zen state?" My solution is to do it *while* you are feeding your baby (or when they fall asleep in your arms). Choose one feeding per day (more if you're up to it!) and instead of scrolling on your phone or turning on the television, do one of the breathing exercises or meditations shared on the following page.

MEDITATIONS AND BREATHING EXERCISES

Simply close your eyes and focus on your breath

Box Breathing

Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, repeat

Inner Sanctuary Meditation

Close your eyes and imagine that you are somewhere in nature (or somewhere else) where you feel relaxed and at peace. Stay there for 5 - 10 minutes if you can.

Guided Meditations

[Guided Meditation for New Moms](#)

[Reiki Healing for Mothers with Postpartum Depression](#)

[Positive Parenting Affirmations - Guided Meditation to Help Mothers Relieve Stress](#)

VISITORS

Answer these questions before giving birth to set boundaries around visitors. It is much easier to be clear on and express what you want before you are in the vulnerable postpartum state.

Will you allow visitors at the hospital? If so, who?

Who is allowed to visit in the first week you are home?

Who is allowed to visit in the first month you are home?

If you feel like someone is overstaying their welcome, how will you deal with this situation?

NOTE TO VISITORS

Dear Visitor:

Welcome! We are so excited for you to meet _____.

Please keep a few things in mind before entering our home:

- Mom and Baby are very tired and require a lot of rest, so please limit your visit to _____ minutes.
- Feel free to lend a helping hand! You can look in the sink for dirty dishes, check the laundry, straighten up, or ask Mom if she wants a snack.
- _____ is nursing around the clock right now and that is Mom's #1 priority. If this makes you uncomfortable, feel free to turn your head.
- Please wash your hands thoroughly before touching or holding the baby. If you are not feeling well, please come back another time.

Thank you!

NOTE TO VISITORS

Dear Visitor,

Mom and Baby are not feeling up to having visitors right now. We had a restless night and are sure you understand.

Please leave a quick note to let us know that you were here using this paper and pen we provided!

If you brought food, please place it in the cooler next to the door. We so appreciate you bringing us this meal. It is so important that we are well nourished right now, so this is one of the most supportive gifts you can give.

We will be in touch soon to set up a time for you to come visit us. We are so excited for you to meet _____!

RESOURCES

Lactation Consultant

Jenn Barry (631) 278-0800 | jennbarry@thevillagesprout.com

Rebecca Joseloff (774) 392-0508 | cairnsbirth@gmail.com

Laura Moritz, RN, CLC (631) 365-5217 | laura@lpresources.net

Placenta Encapsulation

Jenn Barry (631) 278-0800 | jennbarry@thevillagesprout.com

Christina Harris (917) 254-6969 | cmharrisllc@gmail.com

Tempestt Harris (631) 220-5940 | loveydoveydoula@gmail.com

Emily Magee (631) 275-3918 | ecmnutrition@gmail.com

Postpartum Doula

Stephanie Gunderson (631) 848-1771 | thepurpledoula@gmail.com

Christina Harris (917) 254-6969 | cmharrisllc@gmail.com

Marla Hamilton (917) 715-6059 | marlahamilton@gmail.com

Rebecca Joseloff (774) 392-0508 | cairnsbirth@gmail.com

Janalyn Pomeroy (417) 499-0645 | momentstobreathe@gmail.com

RESOURCES

Groups & Community Support

The Nesting Place www.thenestingplaceli.com

- Fourth Trimester Support Group
- Postpartum Support workshops (breastfeeding, pelvic floor, etc.)

Birth and Beyond Resources www.birthandbeyondresources.com

- Mama Moon Program
- Birth Circles

La Leche League www.llli.org

Mental Health

Marissa Sherov, LCSW (516) 661-2122 | marissasherov@gmail.com

Evelyn Page, LCSW | (908) 346-7104 | evelynpagelcsw@gmail.com

Laura Otton, LCSW (631) 223-8536 | laura@therapyformotherhood.com

Postpartum Resource Center of NY State Helpline 855-631-0001

Pelvic Floor Physical Therapist

Lotus Physical Therapy (631) 629-5507

Parrotta Physical Therapy (631) 403-3179

Postpartum Nutrition

Emily Magee, MS, CNS (631) 275-3918 | ecmnutrition@gmail.com

ABOUT EMILY

Emily Magee is a Certified Nutrition Specialist and Nutrition Response Testing Practitioner based in Long Island, NY. After giving birth to her first son in 2018, she felt pulled to serve mothers and children in her community and became a certified childbirth educator and doula. Emily's passion is to help moms who are seeking a natural path to optimal health for themselves and their families. Learn more at www.emilycmagee.com.

