



# Healthy Families Homebirth

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## Preparing for a Healthy Postpartum

Preparing for the postpartum period is just as important as the preparations made before and during the prenatal period. Below you will find a brief overview of some of the physical and emotional changes that will happen after the delivery of your baby. We will also look at some of the needs you will have and some ideas on how to support those needs.

"You were pregnant for nine months; you are postpartum for the rest of your life."  
~Robin Lim

The placenta not only provides your baby with all of the nutrients that were needed inside the womb, it also provided you with lots of estrogen and progesterone to keep the pregnancy going. Once the placenta is born your body must resume the actions that the placenta generously provided. This can take several weeks to become established. The drop in hormones following the birth can lead mothers to feel worn out and uncomfortable, with moments of elation, fears, sadness and joy. Plus, the uterus is returning to a non-pregnant size, your breasts are filling with milk, and your tissues are healing from labor. With all of these physical and emotional changes it is imperative that you allow, or have set-up, others that will take care of you and the space around you. Your partner will also need some time to adjust to this new life. You may find that writing in a journal or recording your birth and postpartum feelings will help you process the experience.

You will need reassurance and love. Your partner, family, or any close friend can provide this for you. Just remember that you are very open emotionally during this time, so be sure to surround yourself with positive people. For the first month, don't plan on going anywhere or doing much besides nursing and resting. By letting yourself rest you will be feeling "back to normal" quicker than if you had been doing too much activity. In fact, your body will also let you know. The first few weeks you will be discharging lochia. For the first several days it will be red and similar to a heavy menstrual flow. Then it will become brownish and last for a couple more weeks. If you have been exerting yourself too much, the lochia may turn bright red. This is a reminder to slow down.

You need time and space to heal from labor, bond with your baby, and create a family. By creating a postpartum support sign-up sheet, you can let your community help with the house chores. This can be done at the baby shower or at a church or community function. Have a list of things that need to be done handy for visitors to do. A nice way to get some postpartum experience, is to offer your help to another mother who has just given birth. This could also start a chain of mothers who provide food or household chores to a new mother.

By allowing yourself the time needed to heal you are setting up important foundations. The birth can be processed and family bonding can happen. This is the time that breastfeeding will become established and baby's cues can be learned. Mom, baby, partner, and siblings can build a routine. Your body can heal all the tissues, muscles, and fluids. Your confidence and



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self-worth will improve. You can feel supported and cared for by those around you and a community can be built and reinforced.

Below are a few more suggestions and resources:

- Freeze meals ahead of time. Using disposable plates can cut down on dishes.
- Have bills written out or on auto-pay before the baby comes
- Request help with meals, laundry, housework, pet care and care of older children
- Consider hiring a postpartum doula

Example of a sign-up sheet:

Name	Phone Number	Support offered	Dates available
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