



POSTNATAL PLANNING

WHY MAKE A POSTNATAL PLAN?

Across the world many cultures have traditions for the postnatal period that set an amount of time aside for the mother or birthing person to rest, recover and adapt to parenthood. Friends and family gather to care for the new parents during this time and it is recognised that support is required when a new baby arrives in to the family.

In the UK, very few traditions are recognised or practised, with sometimes praise even given to parents who are seen to be up and about and returning to "normal". With 1 in 5 women suffering with postnatal depression and some of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the world, perhaps it is time to change how we look at the postnatal period here in the UK.

In creating a postnatal plan it is recognising the need for rest, recovery, support, and time to adapt to parenthood. While every eventuality cannot be planned for, the real value of a postnatal plan is in creation of it; the exploring of options, finding what is important to you, and how that can be achieved.

THE FOURTH TRIMESTER

The Fourth Trimester is a term coined to the first few months of a baby's life. A time where the baby is adapting from life outside of the womb and also a time where parents are adapting to their new roles. Like any new job there is often a period of settling in and learning the new role. Parenting is no different with many new skills and emotions to navigate, recognition is needed for the time required to transition in to a whole new person. A mother, a father, a parent.

When a baby is born they enter a very different environment; from a dark, warm, cosy place to bright lights, loud sounds, and spacious environments; which can be an overload on the senses. Helping recreate a womb like environment during the fourth trimester can assist in the baby's transition from womb to world.

WOMB	WORLD	IDEAS FOR TRANSITION
DARK	LIGHT	SOFT LIGHTING, CALM SPACE
MUFFLED SOUNDS, CONSTANT HEARTBEAT	LOUD SOUNDS, UNFAMILIAR SOUNDS	USE FAMILIAR SOUNDS SUCH AS PARENT VOICE, SKIN TO SKIN TO HEAR HEARTBEAT,

WHITE NOISE,
HUMMING/SHUSHING SOUNDS

WARM

CHANGING TEMPERATURES

SKIN TO SKIN TO HELP
REGULATE TEMPERATURE

CONFINED SPACE

LOTS OF SPACE

HOLD BABY CLOSE, USE OF
SLINGS

CONSTANT MOTION

OFTEN STATIC

WALK WITH BABY IN SLING,
ROCK, SWAY

CONSTANT SUPPLY OF
FOOD

SPACED FEEDS

FEEDING ON DEMAND AND
LOOKING FOR EARLY
HUNGER CUES DISPLAYED
BY BABY

WHAT TO EXPECT FOR THE POSTNATAL BODY

There can be lots of changes to the body after pregnancy, however the baby is born.

POSTNATAL BODY	STRATEGIES
AFTER PAINS- Usually for a few days after birth as the uterus contracts to return to original size	HOT WATER BOTTLES REST EMPTY BLADDER OFTEN
BLEEDING – known as lochia, it is the body shedding the uterine lining after pregnancy. Can be heavy but lightens up and can last up to 6 weeks	HAVE A SUPPLY OF MATERNITY PADS FOR THE WEEKS AFTER BIRTH KEEP TRACK OF CLOTS – Lots of large clots may be a sign of something more serious and needs reporting to the midwife
SORE PERINEUM - can be swollen, bruised or have stitches after birth. Can be sore to urinate.	CHILLED PADS – Frozen sanitary pads with witch hazel POUR WARM WATER OVER AREA WHILE URINATING OR URINATE IN SHOWER
CONSTIPATION	EAT FIBROUS FOOD – Grains, fresh fruit, veg DRINK LOTS OF FLUIDS
HAEMORRHOIDS- can occur from pushing during labour	TOPICAL ANAESTHETICS HOT AND COLD COMPRESS SITZ BATH
CHANGING BREASTS - Can become engorged when milk comes in.	MASSAGE BREASTS, WARM FLANNEL, SOAK IN SHOWER OR BATH CAN HELP EASE DISCOMFORT

SORE OR CRACKED NIPPLES

SEEK SKILLED SUPPORT -

Breastfeeding can have challenges, seeking skilled support can help make adjustments to ensure comfort.

CAESAREAN SCAR

AVOID HEAVY LIFTING AND DRIVING

KEEP SCAR CLEAN

PAINKILLERS FOR DISCOMFORT

WEAR LOOSE CLOTHES WITH HIGH WAISTBAND

DRINK PEPPERMINT TEA TO HELP EASE ANY TRAPPED GAS

NIGHT SWEATS-

Common in weeks after birth as shed extra water retained during pregnancy

DRINK EXTRA WATER TO AVOID

DEHYDRATION

WEAR LOOSE CLOTHING

LAY ON A TOWEL

PELVIC FLOOR-

May experience some incontinence due to the pressure put on the pelvic floor from pregnancy and birth

PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES

SKILLED SUPPORT -

Pelvic floor therapist, a mummy MOT check up

HAIR LOSS -

In the months after birth hair that has been retained during pregnancy starts to shed

GOOD NUTRITION

FLUCTUATING MOODS-

Low mood often called 'Baby blues' is common day 3-5, often in conjunction with the milk transitioning from colostrum to a more milky consistency

SELF HELP TECHNIQUES

SEEK SKILLED SUPPORT IF ONGOING -

Ongoing low moods or changes to usual behaviour could be signs of postnatal depression. Speak with the health visitor or GP

CREATING A POSTNATAL PLAN

"It takes a village to raise a child" is the old saying, and still remains true to this day.

Thinking about how the baby's needs can be met during their transition from womb to world and meeting your own needs of a changing body and transitioning to a parent; what will your support look like during this time? What do you need help with? Who will be part of your village?

If you wish, use the template below to think about the different categories where support may be needed and what you can put in place.



MY POSTNATAL PLAN

YOUR POSTANTAL PERIOD

What would you like your postnatal period to look like?

HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT

What may you need support with? Who can help with this?

FOOD AND NUTRITION

How can you ensure you are nourished and fully hydrated?

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Who can you turn to for support if struggling? How can they help you?

HELP WITH OLDER CHILDREN

What might you need help with? Who can help?

How can you prepare older children for arrival of the baby?

POSTNATAL RECOVERY

What are you expecting? What supplies do you need?

VISITORS

Who would you like to have around?

Any rules you would like to set? How will you enforce these rules?

YOUR RELATIONSHIP

If you have a partner how will you make time for each other?

USEFUL CONTACTS

MIDWIFE: _____

HEALTH VISITOR: _____

DOCTOR: _____

LACTATION CONSULTANT: _____

POSTNATAL DOULA: _____

OTHER: _____

NCT FEEDING HELPLINE: 0300 330 0700

NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING HELPLINE: 0300 100 0212

PANDAS HELPLINE (Pre & Postnatal Depression support/helpline): 0808 1961 776

ASSOCIATION OF TONGUE-TIE PRACTITIONERS: www.tongue-tie.org.uk