

M A R L E Y & M O O
M A T E R N I T Y

THE FIRST
POSTPARTUM MOMMY
PLAN

40 DAYS

contents

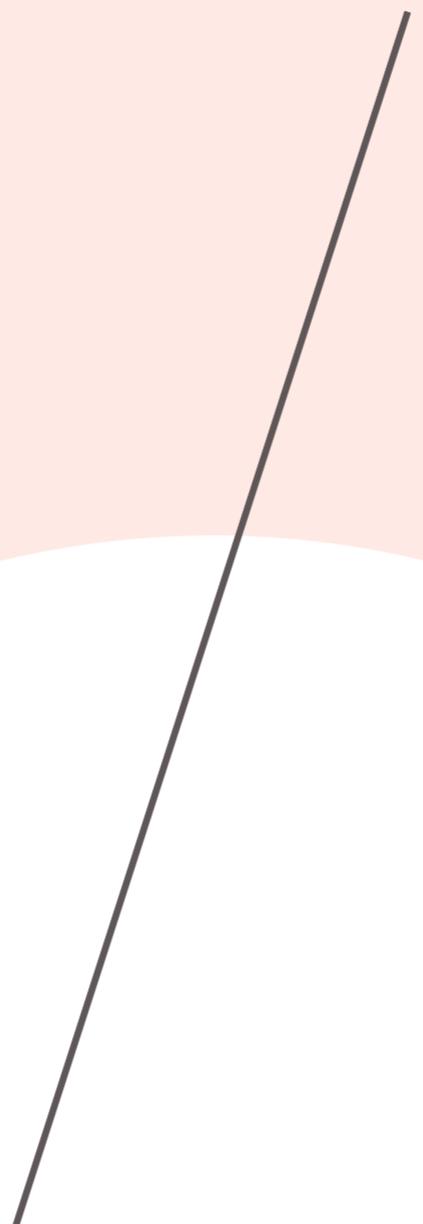
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W H Y M A K E A
P L A N

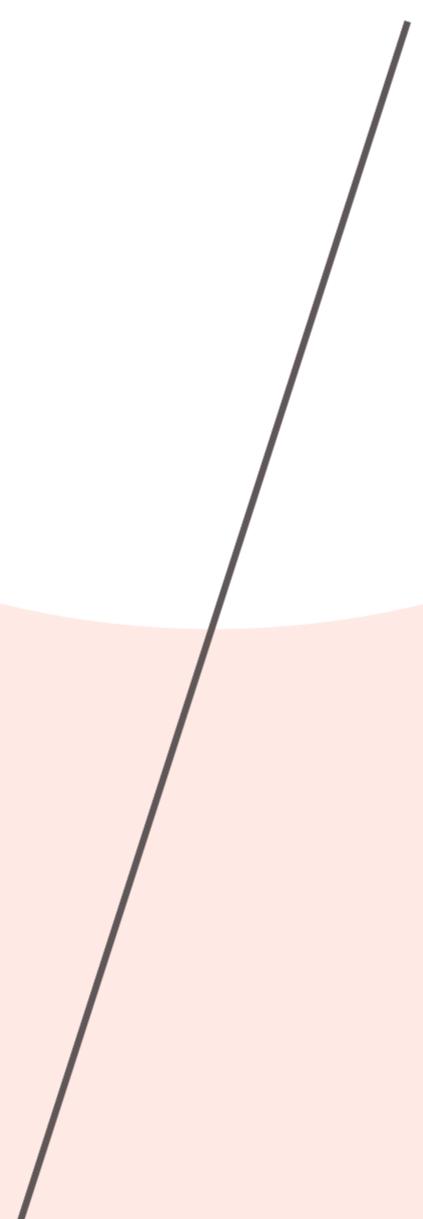
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T H I N G S T O
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W H Y M A K E
A P L A N ?



01

WHY A POSTPARTUM PLAN

A woman's labour and birth experience is extremely important and can set the stage for the postpartum period as well as long term emotional and physical health for both mom and baby. However, planning for what comes next (the postpartum/postnatal period) is often overlooked. The days and weeks following the birth of your baby are a major time of transition physically, mentally and emotionally. It is a lot like the time and effort that typically goes into planning a wedding while often overlooking the lifelong marriage that comes after it. The postpartum period is generally defined as the first 6 weeks following the birth of your baby.

Just like labor and birth, there are a lot of unknowns in the postpartum period and you may not truly know what you need until it's happening, but it's SO important to start thinking now about supports you might need in place to set you up for success in the early days. Once baby is here it can be a whirl wind of epic proportions and your self-care and nourishment can get moved quickly to the bottom of the list. A postpartum plan can support you and your growing family with a smooth transition and help to ensure you don't lose yourself in the process.

Lots of diapers, sleepless nights and forgetting to brush your teeth are pretty much a given but a lot of the challenge that comes in the days and weeks after baby is born can be lessened (at least in part) by planning ahead, slowing down and work effectively with your new reality.

This process can be easier by having supports in place like meals, family support and maybe even a Postpartum Doula. As you get more comfortable in your role as a parent and have physically healed, it's important to start to reclaim bits of time for yourself. If your baby's health and well-being is a priority (and of course it is!) then so too should be your own. Your child is profoundly interconnected with you. This means that taking care of yourself is a very real way of caring for your child. This plan will help you to ensure that your health and well-being remain as much a priority as baby.

02



T H I N G S T O
C O N S I D E R

02

THINGS TO CONSIDER

1. Taking Care of Baby
2. Taking Care of Mom
3. Bonding with Baby
4. Visitors/Guests
5. Delegation of Roles
6. Mom and Partner Self Care
7. Sleeping Arrangements
8. Meal Planning, Preparation
and Postpartum Nutrition
9. Processing the Birth
Experience
10. Breastfeeding Support
11. Community Resources

1. Taking Care of Baby - A key component of your postpartum period is to think about the people in your life who can support you and your partner, be that extra pair of hands and do things like meal prep, light housework, taking care of older siblings, etc. so that you and your partner can focus on bonding with baby and rest and recovery.

These people can include family, friends, neighbors, Postpartum Doula or a combination of all of them. Don't be afraid of "bugging" people, they actually DO want to support you. Don't be afraid to look like you don't know what you are doing or can't "handle" it. One of the number one things moms say they wish they had done more of is ask for help.

2. Taking Care of Mom - Once baby is born the spotlight instantly shifts from mom to baby. While the needs of your baby are obviously vital, your health and well-being should not move to the bottom of the list. No matter the method of delivery it is very important that you give yourself time to rest and recover. Just as you go through a lot of changes during pregnancy, your body is going through a lot of changes after birth. Just like the oxygen mask on an airplane, you have to take care of yourself before you are able to take care of anyone else. Think of things you will need after baby is born to assist you in resting and recovering - help around the house, having baby care stations set up on the main floor of the house or in your bedroom, or healing tools such as premade healing pads and/or herbal baths.

FROZEN POSTPARTUM PADS

These can be made in the final weeks of pregnancy and kept in the freezer so they are ready when needed.

- ~ 1 part alcohol free witch hazel
 - ~ 1 part aloe vera gel
- ~ 3-5 drops lavender essential oil (optional)
- ~ Mix in a small bowl and spray or spread over pads/cloths
 - ~ Stack saturated pads placing foil or parchment in between so they don't freeze together
- ~ Place stack in a mixing bowl to help them pre-form to a woman's body (optional)

3. Bonding with Baby - Sometimes bonding happens immediately, and sometimes it doesn't. No matter your experience, know that it's normal. Think of activities that you can do as a family that will help encourage the bonding process. Things to consider might be staying in bed, skin to skin, breastfeeding, and baby wearing (this is a great one for mom and partner!) See the plan for more ideas. If there are older siblings in the family it is important to try to include them in some of these activities and get their assistance with baby in ways that are age appropriate to them to help them bond with baby and feel like they still have a place in the family. It becomes more of a juggling act once you have more than one as you will want to find one on one time with older siblings when possible to maintain the bond you've formed with them and assist them in adjusting to their new reality.

4. Visitors/Guests - Depending on your personality and how social you are to begin with, you'll have different ideas of how many visitors is too many and how soon you want to invite visitors at all. You may want to consider a "baby moon" for the first few days or weeks following birth where you minimize visitors and just focus on bonding, rest and recovery, learning to breastfeed, etc. The hours, days and weeks after birth is not a time for you to be worrying about entertaining guests. It's important for you and your partner to discuss your expectations around visitors ahead of time to help prevent any disagreement later on. If visitors ask if they can bring something a good answer is always food. If they ask if they can help, say yes and give them a job - maybe emptying the dishwasher or watching baby so you can have a shower.

Don't be afraid to stipulate how long the visit will be before people arrive and to clearly state when the visit is over because you need to tend to your or baby's needs.

5. Delegation of Roles - It is common for there to be tension between a couple if each has different expectations about how life with baby will be and they are not communicated. It's very important to take some time now, before baby arrives, to talk openly about the roles you see each other performing.

Consider the following:

Are you going to need extra help?

Who is going to do the laundry and dishes?

Who is going back to work and when?

Who will be up in the night with baby?

If communication is already a challenge for you as a couple, it won't get easier when you are tired, so this is one to work on now.

6. Mom and Partner Self-Care - It's important to immediately start scheduling "me" time after baby is born. What "me" time looks like in the first weeks and months will likely be quite different than before, but even a 20 minute bath or the opportunity to walk around the block by yourself or go for a pedicure can make a world of difference. It's important to remember that while you are now a parent, you are still YOU. Take some time to think about the things that make you feel like YOU, make you feel relaxed, refreshed and happy. Make a commitment to do those things regularly. At least 10-20 minutes a day of doing something that makes you feel good. This is important for both mom and partner and making this a priority can help to strengthen your relationship as a couple as it helps to prevent resentment from

building and increases your positive energy to nurture your baby and each other.

7. Sleeping Arrangements - Be open and flexible in this area and do what you need to do to ensure everyone is getting the sleep they need in a safe way. You may need to try a few different options until you find what works best for you and your family. In the weeks before your due date I recommend that you put the pregnancy books away and spend some time learning about baby sleep patterns and infant development. Learning what is normal and natural for a baby will help you in those early days to relax and go with the flow. Contact me if you'd like some recommendations.

8. Meal Planning, Preparation and Postpartum Nutrition - Try to plan your meals for at least a month before baby arrives. This can include preparing freezer meals ahead of time. In the last few weeks of pregnancy make it habit to double all recipes and put half away for later. This includes things like muffins, granola bars, soups, stews, etc. Ask for friends to provide freezer meals/snacks or gift certificates to your favourite take out restaurants in lieu of other shower gifts. For second or third babies some women opt for a “fill my freezer” shower instead of a traditional shower. Snacks and meals that you enjoy whether hot or cold and can be eaten one handed are a great idea as you will be holding and/or nursing your baby A LOT in the beginning ~ this means spaghetti may not be your first choice!

Your body is amazing at ensuring your baby gets everything he/she needs from your breastmilk, so it's not necessary to worry too much about baby's nutrition if you are breastfeeding. However, if you are not getting adequate intake of vitamins and minerals your body will start to feel the toll. It's important for your physical, emotional and mental well-being that you are being properly nourished. You need to heal and your body needs to re-set itself. The fluctuations in hormones and sleep deprivation can lead to mental and emotional distress and can be lessened through proper nutrition.

During the postpartum period the last thing you need to worry about is eating any exact diet. Be gentle with yourself and just focus on nutrient-dense whole foods.

These are foods that contain the maximum amount of nutrition with the least amount of empty calories from sugar or unhealthy fats. Nutrient-dense foods include; eggs, fish, meats (organic if possible), plain yogurt or kefir, nuts and seeds, nut and seed butter, brown rice, quinoa, sweet potatoes, green leafy vegetables, fresh fruit, avocados, vegetables in general, coconut oil, herbal teas (nettle and oat straw in-particular). It's easy to get enough nutrition for you and baby if you focus on these foods. The key is to enlist help in the early days to keep ready to eat food and snacks in the fridge at all times. Your partner, family, friends and even a Postpartum Doula can and should be helping in this area.

If you are in the Houston, TX area contact us to discuss meal services.

9. Processing Your Birth Experience -

There is no other experience like childbirth. It pushes you out of your comfort zone and maybe even to the edges of what you thought yourself capable of doing. For many it can be an empowering and affirming experience while for others it can be a disappointing and even traumatic experience. No matter how you feel about your birth it's so important to reflect on how it went and write down your feelings.

Writing down your feelings can be a huge relief. You can just write your birth story chronologically and include your emotions and thoughts, or take it a step further and write a letter to each person that played a key role in how your labour and delivery played out (yourself included).

Writing letters (they don't actually have to be sent) can be a useful outlet to process emotions surrounding people that you don't necessarily want to confront them about.

Writing your child's birth story for them is such a lovely gift for the future. It's lovely to be able to snuggle on the couch and tell them about the day they were born. Many of the details will fade over time so taking some time to write it down (or even narrate it into your smart phone) in the first week or two after the birth is best.

10. Breastfeeding Support - Although breastfeeding is natural, it's not always easy. You and your baby are involved in an intimate dance and it can take time to learn the steps! Finding support from your partner, other moms and a Certified Lactation Consultant (if needed) can make all the difference when learning to breastfeed.

Know ahead of time who the support people are in your area so you can quickly get the help you need, if/when you need it. Make sure you are using credible sources of information - La Leche League, Dr. Jack Newman, etc. for your research and learning around breastfeeding as there is a lot of unhelpful and sometimes dangerous information out there.

11. Community Resources - taking a bit of time now to research some of the resources and services available to you after the birth of your baby is well worth the time. In a sleep deprived state, even Googling something can feel like a lot of work. Think about some of the things you think you might need or fun things you'd like to try with your baby and start a list.

YOU'VE GOT THIS GIRL!

Slow down, take a deep breath and
trust your instincts.

YOU are exactly the person that your
baby needs.

Need more support planning out your pregnancy or postpartum? Contact Marley & Moo Maternity today to schedule a full one hour consultation.

www.marleymoomaternity.com