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AN EXPERT GUIDE TO

# Creating Your Postpartum Game Plan

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# Welcome to your guide for creating a better postpartum experience.

The day you hold that adorable little bundle in your arms will be the most memorable day of your life. For many of you, it will be a dream come true, but as the days go by, that dream will turn into reality, and with it will come many unexpected challenges. We at BINTO wrote this guide to give you a step-by-step toolkit for creating a better postpartum experience, one where the focus is on you – the new mom.

You can follow everything in this guide, or incorporate what works best for you and your family. You've got this, mama.

XX, *Team Binto*

# Dealing with physical changes

Your body will go through certain physical changes in the hours, days, and weeks after delivery. Here's what to expect.

**LOCHIA:** A combination of blood and the lining of the uterus. This becomes whitish after several weeks. It may start and stop, and have clots. Wear sanitary pads rather than tampons during this time.

**PERINEUM:** The area around your vagina may be swollen and tender. You may have had a laceration (tear) or an episiotomy (repair of the tear). Use a Mom-washer or sit in a Sitz bath.

**HEMORRHOIDS:** May result from the weight of the baby and from pushing. Use ice packs to relieve pain and eat lots of fruits and vegetables to prevent constipation.

**BREASTS:** Become enlarged because of lactation. May be tender or even painful. Use icepacks to relieve pain.

**BLADDER:** Urinating may be uncomfortable for the first few days. Pain or burning or the urge to urinate frequently may indicate an infection. Inform your health care provider. Drink lots of water.

**MENSTRUATION:** This may stop while you are breastfeeding. Know that you can still get pregnant. If you are bottle feeding, your period may resume in 4-8 weeks.

**BOWEL MOVEMENTS:** You may not have a bowel movement until 3-4 days following birth. Eat fruits and vegetables and drink water.

# Dealing with hormonal changes

A woman's hormonal levels of estrogen and progesterone decrease hours following childbirth. This may trigger postpartum depression. You may experience intense feelings of sadness or anxiety, and you may have difficulty performing your normal daily activities. This can last as long as one year after childbirth and requires treatment with antidepressants. If you or your family suspects you are experiencing postpartum depression, you should see your doctor right away.

**COULD IT BE POSTPARTUM BLUES?** There are differences between postpartum blues and postpartum depression. You may feel angry toward the baby, your partner or other children. You may cry easily and doubt your ability to look after the newborn. If this feeling goes away within 1-2 weeks without any treatment, you probably experienced postpartum blues.

# Preparing Your Home

Careful preparation of your home before you leave for the hospital will make your transition to motherhood that much easier when you return. With the help of a family member, your spouse, or a trusted friend, you can have the following areas ready to accommodate you and your new baby:

## THE KITCHEN

- Stock up your fridge and pantry with healthy snacks that you can munch on between meals.
- Prepare some nutritious meals and freeze them during your pregnancy so you can heat them in the microwave when you are home alone postpartum.
- Have water bottles, feeding bottles and pumping apparatus (if you need it) close at hand.
- Get a drying rack for the baby bottles and pumping apparatus

## THE FAMILY/LIVING AREA

- Keep an infant changing station with swaddles and anything else you need in this space.
- Keep water bottles and snacks near you.
- Keep a bassinet in this room.

## THE BEDROOM

- Keep a bassinet in the room for the first few weeks/months.
- Always have a water bottle, nipple cream and a soft night light that will not keep you up at night on your nightstand.
- Keep older sheets on your bed - you'll still be bleeding, sweating and leaking for the first few weeks postpartum and you don't want to ruin your good sheets.

# Your Support System

There tends to be a "do-it-all" mentality when it comes to the postpartum stage for women. However, that mentality leads to depression, burn out, and anxiety. Here are our tips to help you use the support system you have, and how to create one postpartum if you don't have support in place.

## THE PEOPLE YOU'LL NEED:

Your partner, if you have one. They can support you in ways others cannot. Talk to your partner during pregnancy and discuss how they can help you with the baby after birth. By engaging your partner in discussions during pregnancy, it will take some of the pressure off while you're postpartum. Things you'll want to cover with them:

- Do they have a parental leave?
- Can they help with night feeds?
- When they get home from work can they relieve you so you can shower, eat, and get some "me time?"

## OTHER SUPPORT SYSTEMS:

- A family member or trusted friend
- A doula for birth and at home
- A baby nurse, if that's an option for you. If you include this on your baby registry, a few family members and friends may get together to provide you one.
- A physical therapist, in case you are struggling with any movement or pelvic floor issues
- A lactation consultant to help with breastfeeding
- A therapist or counselor. You might want to set this up prior to delivery. You can see someone alone or with your partner to help you both adjust to the postpartum period.

## TOOLS YOU'LL WANT TO HAVE AROUND:

- *DockATot*: an easy-to-carry bassinet perfect for travelling
- Organic *cotton pads* and *loose underwear*
- *Nipple balm*: Try Binto's organic blend for optimal nourishment
- *Breast pump* (if you are looking to pump/nurse): Opt for a hands-free option
- *Formula*: Breastfeeding is not for everyone!
- *Nursing bra*
- *Belly band* to help with support and healing
- *Supplements* to support your postpartum health. With Binto, we'll match you with the supplements you need to nourish your body after giving birth.





# What to Expect in the Hospital

This is an overwhelming time for you as a new mom. Work closely with your healthcare team. Take advantage of the many services available to you, so you can advocate for yourself and understand all postpartum instructions.

- Utilize the services of a lactation specialist and review instructions for your perineal care.
- Set up an appointment for postpartum visits and for physical therapy, if necessary.
- Discuss any mental and pain management issues you may have with your healthcare team
- Have someone - your partner or family member - present to write down any important information.
- Rest as much as you can. When you get home, you won't have the help you have in the hospital.



# Tips For Your First Postpartum Care Visit

We suggest you follow ACOG's guidelines for when to schedule your first postpartum appointment.

- Make sure you connect with your care team at 2 weeks postpartum – even if it's just a phone call to check in
- If you're feeling any signs of postpartum depression, schedule a visit ASAP
- Bring your partner with you to the appointment
- Be sure to mention any physical or emotional issues to your provider

Having a new baby is an exciting time, but it is also one of the most challenging. Hopefully with these tips, you can set yourself and your family up for a better postpartum experience.

## SOURCES

[http://www.babies.sutterhealth.org/afterthebirth/newmom/pp\\_physical.html](http://www.babies.sutterhealth.org/afterthebirth/newmom/pp_physical.html)

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[https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/S\\_T/Tips-for-mums-with-a-new-baby-how-to-ask-your-partner-for-help](https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/S_T/Tips-for-mums-with-a-new-baby-how-to-ask-your-partner-for-help)