

# MOTHER + NEWBORN HEALTH INFORMATION

DO RIGHT

A Kenyan mother's guide to a healthy and happy life for herself and her newborn post-birth.



## WHY MUST ALL MOTHERS GIVE BIRTH IN CLINICS?

In Kenya, 7,700 women die each year from complications caused by pregnancy and childbirth, yet almost 90% of these deaths are preventable. Most maternal deaths are directly caused by unsafe childbirth and delivery complications such as severe bleeding, infection, hypertensive disorders, and obstructed labor.

## REASONS WHY ALL MOTHERS SHOULD GIVE BIRTH IN A HEALTH FACILITY:

- Your baby is over 4 times more likely to survive and to live a longer and healthier life if born in a clinic.
- Any birthing complications can be dealt with by experienced medical staff, which means higher chances of survival for both you and your baby.

• If needed, caesarian sections can be performed safely in hospital, which cannot take place at home. Approximately 30% of women need caesarian sections due to many contributing factors (babies position in uterus, illnesses, and other various complications).

• Once the baby is born, the health facility evaluates yours and your newborn's health. If any issues arise, on the spot, help can be given to ensure you and your newborn are safe and in good health.

## KEEP YOURSELF HEALTHY WHILE PREGNANT AND AFTERWARDS

Pregnancy and delivery can take away from a woman's body. It is important to eat well-balanced meals and take care of yourself after birth to ensure a faster recovery. Breastfeeding also places strain on your body, which you need to compensate for.

### TAKE CALCIUM

Calcium is an important nutrient for a woman after delivery, whether or not you breastfeed. Pregnancy and breastfeeding take calcium from your body.

*Suggested foods: milk, fermented milk, fish, green colored vegetables*

### TAKE IRON

The bleeding following birth can last weeks and makes you lose iron levels in your body. Iron is important to rebuild your blood supply even if you do not suffer from anemia. It is recommended that you add iron-rich foods to your diet for at least the first 10 days after delivery.

*Suggested foods: beef, spinach, sukuma wiki*

### TAKE FATTY ACIDS

Omega-3 fatty acids aid in brain and eye development in fetuses and babies. They pass through your breast milk. Fatty acids also benefit mothers, because they reduce inflammation and help control blood pressure.

*Suggested foods: Eat two to three meals with fish per week.*

## MOTHER ILLNESSES

### Puerperal sepsis

Signs/symptoms:

- Fever
- Pain in lower abdomen/ pelvis
- Foul smelling discharge
- Pale skin
- Chills
- Feeling of discomfort/illness
- Headache
- Loss of appetite
- Increased heart rate

### Puerperal psychosis

Signs/symptoms:

- Delusions (hearing things that are not there)
- Hallucinations
- Feeling irritated
- Hyperactivity
- Inability to sleep/decreased need
- Paranoia and suspiciousness
- Rapid mood swings
- Difficulty communicating at times
- Confused thinking
- Mood swings
- Disorganized behavior
- Poor judgment
- Not functioning properly

### Postpartum hemorrhage

Signs/symptoms:

- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Decreased blood pressure
- Increased heart rate
- Swelling and pain in vagina

### Anemia

Signs/symptoms:

- Paleness
- Fatigue
- Swollen lower limbs
- Weak
- Confused
- Dizziness
- Inability to stand or walk without support

### Postpartum Blues

Signs/symptoms:

- Feelings of confusion
- Feeling irritability
- Feeling tired
- Feeling tearfulness
- Having mood swings within 10 days after child birth.

### Postpartum Depression

Signs/symptoms:

- Sleep problems
- Too little or too much sleep
- Appetite problems
- Loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Unable to concentrate
- Suicidal thoughts (of yourself or infanticide)

### Urinary tract infection/ genital infections

Signs/symptoms:

- Lower abdominal pain
- Painful micturition
- Pus discharge from perineal bruises/tears.



## IF YOU OR YOUR NEWBORN HAS ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS AFTER DELIVERY YOU MUST GO THE CLINIC.

If you or your baby experiences any of the conditions below you must be admitted to a health facility for antibiotics, nutritional support or for observation of your symptoms..



## NEWBORN ILLNESSES

### Neonatal sepsis

Signs/symptoms:

- Poor feeding
- Yellow eyes (jaundice)
- Unusual rashes
- Seizures
- Projectile vomiting
- Abdominal distension
- High fevers

### Pneumonias: bronchopneumonia/ aspiration pneumonia

Signs/symptoms:

- Cough - May cough up greenish or yellow mucus, or even bloody mucus
- Fever
- Shaking chills
- Shortness of breath

### Congenital abnormalities- heart defect

Signs and symptoms:

- Rapid breathing
- Cyanosis (a bluish tint to the skin, lips, and fingernails)
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Poor blood circulation

### Birth asphyxia/ meconium aspiration syndrome

Signs/symptoms:

- Baby not breathing or breathing is very weak
- Skin colour is bluish or pale
- Heart rate low
- Muscle tone is poor
- Weak reflexes
- Amniotic fluid is stained with meconium (first stool)
- Baby experiencing seizures

### Head trauma- severe, moderate, mild

Signs/symptoms:

- Seizures
- Neck stiffness
- Difficulties in focusing the eyes
- Vomiting

## HOW A MOTHER CAN HELP HER NEWBORN SUCCEED AND SHINE

Mothers need to stimulate their newborn to help the baby succeed and shine later in life.

How:

- Look at the baby for signs that the baby is hungry or uncomfortable
- Look at your baby's eyes
- Talk and sing to your baby
- Hold your baby in your arms





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