

My Postpartum Plan Worksheet The Handmaid Doula Service

*Karen Kostohris, CD(DONA), CPD(Welcome Baby Care) CLC
Certified Lactation Counselor*

Why a Postpartum Plan?

*A Postpartum plan is much like a Birth plan. It helps you to plan for a smooth transition adjusting to your new family dynamics in the first few weeks. Many new parents are unprepared for the challenges that face them following the birth of a child. They are not aware of the demands of caring for a newborn, healing from childbirth and how lack of sleep will affect them. They expect that the transition period will only last a couple weeks before life returns to normal. The reality is that the adjustment, both physical and emotional, lasts with some intensity for the first three months following birth; any parent of a baby or toddler will tell you that the challenges do not end there. *The Postpartum Plan Worksheet* is designed to help new parents have realistic expectations of their early months with a baby and set up their support network in advance.*

Remember to honor this time as a rite of passage. This is your “Baby moon” phase. You will only experience this time once for this baby. Make it count for you and your family. All the “undone” work will still be there after 3 months, but your newborn will no longer be a newborn! Even if you feel really good after the birth, doing too much too soon could prevent your uterus from healing, bring on mastitis and/or put you at greater risk for postpartum mood disorders. It is your job to rest, recover and bond with your baby. EXPECT that you will need help.☺ Relax, trust your “mommy instincts” and enjoy your baby!

*Take some time to reflect and discuss this worksheet with your partner and family members **BEFORE** bringing baby home!*

Sleep and Rest

How many hours of sleep did you require pre-pregnancy? Here's an approach to help you get as much (or almost as much) sleep as you need:

- 1. Determine how many hours of sleep you needed pre-pregnancy. You still need that much sleep after baby!*
- 2. Since you cannot get this amount of sleep in one stretch because of feeding interruptions/baby care, you will need more hours in bed to get your necessary sleep.*
- 3. Plan to stay in bed or keep going back to bed until you have slept your allotted number of hours. This means that with the exception of trips to the bathroom, **you do not get up!** You do not brush your teeth, shower, or dress in the early morning. Make a mental note of approximately how many hours you have slept since you went to bed. You may have to stay in bed from 10pm until noon the next day to get 8 hours of sleep! If that's what it takes, do it. Then brush your teeth, take a shower, and greet the day.*

Physical Recovery

What is important to you when determining how you expect to physically recover from the birth?

How will you achieve these things? (sleep, Self-care, exercise, support, etc) :

Breastfeeding/Infant Feeding

How do you plan on feeding your baby?

If you are breastfeeding, do you have help or support? If this is your first baby, you will need support.

What are your expectations for feeding the baby? Feeding cues? Schedule?

Care for Baby

Will you have a feeding/elimination chart for baby?

Who will change diapers? Bathe baby etc.?

Meals/Food

What meals can you make ahead and freeze for the weeks following birth?

Can you make double batches of meals now to freeze for later?

Will you have help with meal preparation after the birth?

Who will cook after baby arrives? (not Mom!)

What nutritious and affordable take-out or delivery options do you have?

What nutritious quick breastfeeding snacks can you have on hand?

In-Home Help

Will you have extra help around the house for laundry, dishes, meals, etc.?

Who will help?

Partner?

Relatives?

Friends?

Postpartum doula?

Nanny?

Where will baby sleep?

Co-sleeping in our bed?

Have the baby in the same room but sleeping in a cradle/bassinet beside us?

Have the baby sleep in his/her own room?

Care for Siblings/Pets

Who will care for baby's siblings during the postpartum period?

What care will be needed?

Who will care for pets?

Defining Roles/Expectations

Who will:

1. Care for the baby?
2. Care for the siblings?
3. Do the cleaning?
4. Do the cooking?
5. Do the laundry?
6. Be at home?
7. Do the shopping?
8. Run the errands?
9. Transport siblings to places?
10. Care for pets?
11. Other?

As the mother, I expect the father's role to be....

As the father, I expect the mother's role to be....

Our Relationship:

It is important to our relationship that we...

Family and Friends

Who is going to be involved in your support over the postpartum period?

Visitors

What will be our policy for visitors?

We expect to have _____ visitors in the first week.

We expect to have _____ visitors in the second week.

***Plan to limit guests during the early weeks, if necessary. Be clear with your friends and relatives your thoughts on visiting! Ask all visitors to wash their hands and help with any household chores during their visit.*

Laundry

Who will do the laundry?

My greatest concern is....

(both parents should acknowledge any concerns)

Other things that are important for me to discuss with my partner/caregivers are: