

# The Partner's Postpartum Guide



*A Guide to Supporting Your Partner After  
Birth*

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FOX & CUB FAMILY WELLNESS

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# Introduction



## Your Role in Postpartum

Welcome, partner! If you're here, it means you're ready to roll your sleeves up and step into one of the most important roles you'll ever play.

Parenthood changes everything—beautifully and sometimes chaotically—but let me tell you this: in all my time and experience as a postpartum doula working with families, how you show up in these early weeks and months of postpartum sets the tone for not just the recovery of the mother, but the strength and unity of your family. No pressure, eh? Don't worry, I've got you.

Let's talk about your role for a second. In the traditional postpartum world, the mother is the star of the show—but not the kind who's expected to juggle a million hats while running on empty. She's the star that needs to be cocooned, protected, nourished, and held (physically, emotionally, and spiritually). And guess what? That's where you come in. You're her anchor, her shield, her biggest cheerleader. She's just brought life into the world, and now it's your job to help her rest, recover, and thrive.

Creating equity during this time is crucial. This isn't about splitting everything 50/50; it's about balancing the load so everyone feels supported. The reality is, her body is doing some next-level healing, and if she's breastfeeding, she's also doing the lion's share of keeping your baby alive. So, it's your time to step up and take on as much of the rest as you can—housework, meals, holding the baby so she can nap, running interference with well-meaning visitors who don't know when to leave (trust me, they're coming).

This guide is here to make sure you're fully equipped to rise to this challenge with confidence. I'm in your corner!

Are you ready? Let's go!



\*This guide primarily uses the lens of heterosexual couples for simplicity, but the principles of equity, support, and partnership apply to all relationships—so no matter your dynamic, feel free to adapt this guide to meet the unique needs of your family.

# What Postpartum Really Looks Like

## 01

### The Fourth Trimester Explained

*You've probably heard about the sleepless nights, the diapers, and the endless cups of cold coffee. But there's more to postpartum than that. The fourth trimester is a term used to describe the first 12 weeks after birth—a time when the mother's body, mind, and heart are recovering, adjusting, and recalibrating after pregnancy and birth*

***Physically, she's healing from labor or surgery, her hormones have just taken the most rapid nosedive that any human will ever experience, and she might be navigating breastfeeding (or other feeding choices), all while learning how to care for a newborn.***

*Your baby, meanwhile, is adjusting to life outside the womb. They need to feel safe, warm, and close, which means a lot of holding, soothing, and responding to their needs—by both of you. This period isn't just about survival (though some days it will feel like that); it's about laying the foundation for a lifetime of connection, trust, and resilience.*

### Your Role as Protector, Caregiver, and Advocate

Here's the deal: right now, your partner needs someone who has her back in every way possible. Think of yourself as her bodyguard, PA, and biggest cheerleader rolled into one.

- **Protector:** This doesn't mean standing guard at the door with a sword (although some visitors might make you feel like that's necessary). It means shielding her from unnecessary stress. Say no to unexpected visitors, run interference with your over enthusiastic relatives (even your mother), and create a calm, peaceful environment where she can focus on healing and bonding with the baby.
- **Caregiver:** Mothering the mother is a phrase that gets thrown around a lot in postpartum care—and for good reason. She's been through a monumental event, and she needs rest, nourishment, and someone to take care of the little things so she can focus on recovering and feeding the baby. That's where you come in.
- **Advocate:** Sometimes, your partner might not feel comfortable speaking up about her needs, whether it's with family, friends, or even healthcare providers. Be her voice when she needs one. Ask the midwife questions, verbally check anyone who oversteps, and always, always listen to what she's telling you she needs.

# POSTPARTUM

## PHASES OF POSTPARTUM

### Phase 1: Immediate Postpartum (First 48 Hours)

*The first 48 hours after birth are a time of profound transition. Her body is still in a heightened state, recovering from birth and beginning to establish the bond with her baby. This period is marked by the powerful rush of oxytocin, which not only helps with uterine contractions and milk production but also fosters an intense emotional connection between mother & baby. But also comes with the drop of estrogen, HCG and progesterone.*

*Focus:*

*Uninterrupted Skin-to-skin contact  
Establish breastfeeding  
Nourishment, hydration & rest*

### Phase 2: Early Postpartum (First Two Weeks)

*The early postpartum phase is when the mother's body begins its deep recovery and starts adjusting to her new role. The initial oxytocin rush has settled, but the hormones play a crucial role, especially during breastfeeding. This phase involves physical healing and emotional adaptation as the mother begins navigating the realities of caring for her newborn.*

*Engagement Focus:*

- *Ongoing Physical Recovery*
- *Nutrient-Rich Nourishment*
- *Emotional Support*

### Phase 3: Ongoing Postpartum (Lifelong)

*Postpartum is a lifelong journey. It can take up to two years before hormones plateau. While the mother may physically recover within the first few months, the emotional and spiritual aspects of motherhood continue to evolve. This phase is about embracing the ongoing transformation, finding balance, and acknowledging that the needs of postpartum change over time but never fully end.*

*Focus:*

*Continued Self-Care  
Community and Connection  
Honoring the Journey*

# Understanding Your Role: Building the Cocoon

The postpartum period isn't just about the baby. It's about the **mother. I can't stress this enough.**

She's just given her all to bring life into this world, and now she needs to be cared for just as much as the baby does.

In many traditional cultures, postpartum care revolves around nurturing the mother. She's given nutrient-dense foods, her body is wrapped or massaged, and her sole focus is on healing and connecting with her baby while the community takes care of everything else. This idea of cocooning—a sacred, protected space where she can recover—is something we've lost sight of in modern life. Your job is to bring it back.

## ***Creating a cocoon means:***

- Prioritizing her rest and recovery.
- Taking over the practical tasks (hello, laundry mountain).
- Encouraging her to nourish herself with warm, healing meals.
- Keeping the outside world at bay so she can focus inward.

***When the mother is nurtured, she thrives—and when she thrives, so does your baby.***



YOU'RE IN THIS TOGETHER  
BOTH PARENTING ROLES IN  
POSTPARTUM ARE ESSENTIAL

# Understanding Your Role:

## The Equity Equation: Balancing the Load

# 01

Now let's talk about balance.

*The old idea of splitting the load 50/50 doesn't cut it in postpartum. The reality is, your partner is doing some heavy lifting that you'll never physically experience.*

*So, equity isn't about doing the same things; it's about doing what's needed to keep the scales balanced. If she's feeding the baby, you're cooking dinner. If she's napping, you're sorting the laundry. If she's crying (yes, that will happen), you're the one offering a hug, a listening ear, or a tissue.*

*It's not glamorous work, but it's essential. By stepping up and lightening her load, you're creating a partnership that's rooted in care and respect. And here's the best part: when you show up for her in this way, you're also creating a foundation for your baby to grow up in a home where love, support, and teamwork are the norm.*

So what practical things can you do to share the physical and mental load in postpartum?



Lets dive deeper into these topics:

- **Sharing the Physical Load**
- **Sharing the Mental Load**
- **Tag Teaming Responsibilities**

# Understanding Your Role:

## The Equity Equation: Balancing the Load

# 01

## SHARING THE PHYSICAL LOAD

### 1. **Night Feed Support:**

If your partner is breastfeeding, take over burping the baby, changing diapers, or settling them back to sleep after feeds. If they're pumping or formula-feeding, alternate feeds to let each other rest.

### 2. **Meal Prep and Cooking:**

Take charge of cooking or reheating meals. Stock up the freezer with easy, nutritious options or coordinate with friends/family who want to help by bringing food.

### 3. **Household Chores:**

Own the daily grind—dishes, laundry, vacuuming, tidying. Don't wait to be asked or for her to remind you (mental load alert: more on that below).

### 4. **Baby Soothing:**

Rock, bounce, cuddle, or baby-wear to give your partner breaks. If the baby cries after a feed or just needs comforting, step in.

### 5. **Errands and Appointments:**

Handle grocery shopping, pharmacy runs, or picking up any postpartum supplies like pads, nipple cream, or snacks she loves.



## SHARING THE MENTAL LOAD

### 1. **Plan Ahead:**

Think about what needs doing before it becomes an issue. Running low on diapers? Notice it and restock. Dishes piling up? Sort it without asking.

### 2. **Take Ownership of a System:**

Decide who's managing what to avoid decision fatigue. For example, you handle scheduling baby check-ups and household bills, while she focuses on feeding and recovery.

### 3. **Visitor Management:**

Be the gatekeeper. Let people know when visits aren't a good idea or politely set time limits so she doesn't have to.

"Thanks for stopping by! Mom and baby need rest now, so we'll catch up again soon."

### 4. **Emotional Check-Ins:**

Regularly ask how she's feeling—physically, mentally, and emotionally. Listen without interrupting, fixing, or brushing off her concerns.

### 5. **Recognize Her Needs Before She Asks:**

If she's sitting down to feed the baby, grab her a drink or snack. If she looks overwhelmed, offer to take the baby so she can shower, nap, or just breathe.

## ***Tag Teaming Responsibilities***

### **■ *Rotating Breaks:***

- Schedule time for each of you to have a break daily, even if it's just 20 minutes for a walk, a bath, or a scroll through social media in peace.

### **■ *Taking Turns with Emotional Load:***

- If she's had a hard day, be her support and let her vent. On another day, let her know when you're feeling overwhelmed so she can do the same for you.

### **■ *Baby Bonding Time:***

- Give her space to heal by spending one-on-one time with the baby. Whether it's bath time, tummy time, or simply holding them while she rests, it strengthens your bond with your baby and gives her a much-needed breather.

# Physiology of Postpartum: What You Need to Know

## 02

Understanding the physical and emotional changes your partner will go through in the postpartum period is **ESSENTIAL** for both of you. Birth is a monumental experience that affects every part of the body, mind, and spirit. By getting a grip on what's happening behind the scenes, you'll be better equipped to offer thoughtful, practical support and be the partner she needs during this vulnerable, transformative time.

### The Physical Healing Process

#### 1. **The Uterus Shrinking Back Down (Involution):**

After delivery, the uterus starts contracting to shrink back to its pre-pregnancy size. These contractions, often called "afterpains," can feel intense, especially during breastfeeding due to the release of oxytocin. This process can last several weeks.

- **Support Tip:** Encourage her to use a hot water bottle or heating pad for cramps. Castor oil packs are wonderful too. Warm teas with anti-inflammatory herbs like ginger or chamomile can also help.



# Physiology of Postpartum: What You Need to Know

## 02

### The Physical Healing Process

#### **2. The Lochia (Postpartum Bleeding):**

She'll experience bleeding as the uterus sheds its lining. This can last anywhere from two to six weeks and transitions from bright red to brownish, then to a pale yellow or white.

- **Support Tip:** Stock up on high-absorbency organic maternity pads and make sure she has comfortable underwear. Encourage her to rest to avoid overexertion.

#### **3. Perineal Healing (for Vaginal Births):**

If she experienced tearing or had an episiotomy, the perineum will need time to heal. It may feel sore, swollen, or tender for weeks.

- **Support Tip:** Encourage her to use a peri bottle with warm water after using the loo, apply cold packs to reduce swelling, and try sitz baths with healing herbs like calendula or lavender.

#### **4. C-Section Recovery (if Applicable):**

A C-section is major abdominal surgery, and recovery includes healing from the incision, managing pain, and avoiding strain.

- **Support Tip:** Help her avoid heavy lifting, support her when getting out of bed, and keep the incision clean and dry. Do all tasks that require bending.

# Physiology of Postpartum: The Hormones

## 02



*Let's not sugarcoat it: the postpartum hormone shift is massive. We're talking about the single biggest hormone drop any human will experience—ever. It's bigger than puberty, menstruation, or even menopause combined. Let that sink in for a moment. Your partner's body, which has been running on a cocktail of supercharged pregnancy hormones for months, now has to slam on the brakes and recalibrate while also healing, recovering, and feeding a tiny human. This isn't just a case of "feeling a bit off." This is a full-on hormonal rollercoaster that can affect everything from her emotions to her energy, sleep, and even how her body functions.*

## The Big Drop

Right after birth, the levels of estrogen and progesterone, the two power house pregnancy hormones, plummet dramatically. These hormones helped sustain the pregnancy, but once the placenta is delivered, they're no longer needed at those sky-high levels. This sudden crash can leave your partner feeling like she's hit an emotional brick wall.

***What It Feels Like:*** She may experience mood swings, irritability, tearfulness, or a sense of being overwhelmed for no clear reason. Even moments of joy can feel heavy.

- o **Support Tip:** If she's crying over a spilled cup of tea, DON'T TRY TO FIX IT—just hold her, tell her it's okay, and remind her that these feelings are temporary and normal.

## Oxytocin: The Love Hormone

Oxytocin surges during and after birth, helping the uterus contract, encouraging bonding with the baby, and promoting breastfeeding.

- What It Feels Like:
- Moments of blissful bonding, but also moments where she might cry at how small the baby's fingers are or worry about whether she's doing enough.
- **Support Tip:**
  - o **Create an environment where she feels safe and supported. Encourage skin-to-skin contact with the baby and make sure she has quiet, uninterrupted time to bond.**

# Physiology of Postpartum: The Hormones

## 02

***Baby Blues vs. Something More Serious*** The first two weeks postpartum often bring the "baby blues," which affect up to **80%** of new mothers. This is a normal response to the hormonal shifts and sheer exhaustion of early parenthood. **However**, if feelings of sadness, anxiety, or detachment persist or intensify, it could signal postpartum depression (PPD) or anxiety (PPA), which require professional support.

- ***What It Feels Like:***

- Baby Blues: Tearfulness, irritability, and mood swings that come and go but don't overwhelm her.
- PPD/PPA: Persistent sadness, feelings of hopelessness, trouble bonding with the baby, or excessive worry that interferes with daily life.

- ***Support Tip:***

- ***If mom has adequate support & her sense of self doesn't improve or if she seems to be struggling, gently suggest talking to a GP, midwife, postpartum doula or counselor. Offer to go with her for support if needed.***

# Breastfeeding Tips & How You Can Support Feeding Without Boobs

## 02

**Feeding your baby is demanding but vital. Whether breastfeeding, bottle feeding, or both, your support makes all the difference.**

### For Breastfeeding:

- **Create Comfort:** Set up a feeding station with snacks, water, and a comfy chair.
- **Assist:** Help with burping, positioning, and settling the baby after feeds.
- **Encourage Rest:** Handle chores or baby care during cluster feeding phases.
- **Seek Help:** If challenges arise, connect her with a lactation consultant or support group.
- **Educate Yourself:** Download my Breastfeeding Guide and read through it so you know what to expect.

### If Not Breastfeeding:

- **Be Supportive:** Remind her that fed is best, no matter the method.
- **Take Over Bottles:** Sterilize, prep, and take on night feeds to share the load.
- **Bond Too:** Use skin-to-skin during bottle feeds to build connection.



# Nurturing the Nurturer:

## 03



Your partner has just done something extraordinary—she's birthed your child. Now it's your turn to step up.

*Here's The Basics* ↪

***These three are the holy grail of postpartum support. If you get these right, you're already halfway there.***

1. Food: Keep Her Fed, Keep Her Happy
2. Sleep: Help Her Rest
3. Boundaries: Protect Her Recovery

*You don't need to have all the answers or do everything perfectly. What matters most is that you're there, paying attention, and doing what you can to lighten her load.*

# Food - Keep her fed, keep her happy

## 03

*When it comes to postpartum recovery, food is love. And as her partner, you can play a massive role in making sure her body gets the fuel it needs to heal, produce milk (if she's breastfeeding), and keep going during those sleepless nights. Here are some practical ways you can step up:*

1. ***Stock the Fridge with Nutrient-Dense Goodies*** - No, I'm not talking about meal-deal sandwiches. We're looking at ***slow-cooked stews, soups, broths, and warming foods packed with nutrients***. Bonus points if you batch-cook a load of meals before the baby arrives and stock the freezer. Even simple things like having pre-washed fruit or boiled eggs in the fridge can be a game-changer. \_\_\_\_\_

2. ***Make Hydration Effortless*** - New moms are constantly thirsty—thanks, breastfeeding hormones. Keep her favorite water bottle filled and close by. Add a herbal tea rotation into the mix: chamomile for calming, nettle for iron, fennel for digestion. And if you're feeling extra, whip up a fancy postpartum hydration drink (coconut water, a splash of orange juice, a pinch of sea salt—it's like a natural electrolyte boost).

# Nourishing Her Postpartum Body - Postpartum Nutrition

## 03

### ***3. Be the SnackHero -***

Nobody has time to wait for a full meal when hunger strikes during a cluster-feeding marathon or a nap gap. Stock up on quick, grab-and-go snacks like energy balls, nuts, dried fruit, oat bars, or even some nice crackers and cheese. The aim is for snacks to be balanced—think protein, healthy fats, and a bit of sweetness for energy.

***5. Be the Grocery Fairy -*** Keep the cupboards stocked so she doesn't have to think about it. Write a list together, make sure it's full of her cravings, and then go off and sort it. If you're busy or not great at remembering everything, online delivery is your new best friend. Just don't forget the chocolate cookies—because balance.

***It's simple: if you want her to feel supported, seen, and human in these early days, don't just ask her what she needs—anticipate it. Food is love, and you've got this.***

# Sleep: Help Her Rest

## 03

She's not going to get eight uninterrupted hours, but you can help her grab rest where she can.

### Night Shift Sharing

If your baby is bottle-fed, take turns with nighttime feeds. If she's breastfeeding, handle burping, diaper changes, and settling so she gets back to sleep faster.

### Nap Patrol

Encourage her to nap during the day while you handle the baby or housework. If you're at work, tell her she should nap with the baby and have zero expectations about the house when you get home.

DO NOT ASK HER  
"WHAT HAVE YOU  
DONE ALL DAY"

Under any circumstances.



# Boundaries: Protect Her Recovery

## 03

### You're The Gatekeeper

#### ***Visitor Management:***

***Politely gatekeep. Keep visits short and limited to people she actually wants to see. This includes your mother (someone has to say it, and she likely won't!)***

#### ***Shield Her from Stress:***

***Take on any admin, appointments, or "mental load" tasks so she can focus on healing and bonding.***



# Nurturing The Nurturer

## 03

### Your Role: Steady, Present, Supportive

#### ***When She Needs a Break: How to Spot Burnout***

***Postpartum burnout is real, and it sneaks up fast. Here's how to recognize the signs and step in before it gets worse:***

- ***Look for the Signs:***
  - ***She's more tearful or irritable than usual.***
  - ***She seems overwhelmed or withdrawn.***
  - ***She says things like "I can't do this" or "I feel like I'm failing."***
- ***Step In:***
  - ***Offer to take the baby for a walk or cuddle so she can rest or shower.***
  - ***Suggest she takes some time to herself—whether that's a nap, a bath, or 20 minutes to scroll on her phone without interruption.***
  - ***Remind her she's not alone, and that you're in this together.***



# NPC: Nurture, Patience, Communication

## 04

### Pillars Of Postpartum

***Nurture: Small Acts That Make a Big Difference*** Nurturing your partner in postpartum isn't about doing one big thing once; it's about consistently showing up with the small, meaningful actions that remind her ***she's not in this alone***. She's recovering physically, emotionally, and mentally. Every small act you do to ease her load contributes to that recovery.

Nurture looks like ***noticing what she needs before she asks***. It's making sure her water bottle is always full, or bringing her a warm drink during a midnight feed. It's cooking her favorite breakfast on a particularly hard morning or running her a bath while she naps. It's sitting beside her when she cries, holding the baby so she can eat with both hands, or taking charge of chores ***without waiting for a list***.

Nurture is about creating an environment where she feels safe to rest and heal. That means ***stepping in to protect*** her from things that drain her energy, like unnecessary visitors or household chaos. Be proactive. Ask yourself, *What can I do right now to make her day a little easier?* And then do it.

It's not about perfection; it's about ***presence***. The small things add up, and over time, they show her she's seen, valued, and supported.

# PATIENCE

# 04

WHY ***SLOWING DOWN*** IS YOUR SUPERPOWER

- Recovery and bonding take time, be steady and supportive.
- Accept newborn unpredictability (e.g., crying, sleepless nights) as part of the process.
- Avoid rushing her recovery or expecting things to "go back to normal."
- Stay calm and intentional, giving her space to figure things out at her own pace.

# Communication: Listening Without Fixing

## 04



***Postpartum is a time of emotional highs and lows. Your partner may cry over things that seem small or feel overwhelmed by tasks that used to be simple.***

She's processing a lot, the biggest hormone drop known to man, physical recovery, new responsibilities, and the life-changing reality of parenthood. What she needs most from you is not solutions, it's understanding. ***Men naturally want to fix, but what women really want is for you just to listen.***

***When she shares how she's feeling, resist the urge to offer advice or jump to solutions. Instead, focus on validating her experience. Say things like, "That sounds really hard," or "I can see why you're feeling that way." Sometimes, all she needs is for someone to hear her without judgment.***

***Ask open-ended questions:***

- ***"What's on your mind today?"***
- ***"How can I help you feel more supported right now?"***
- ***And then let her answer without interrupting or redirecting the conversation to yourself.***

# **Communication:** Listening Without Fixing

## 04

### *Communicating Your Feelings Too*



Communication also means being honest about your **own feelings**. If you're feeling tired, overwhelmed, or unsure of what to do, share that with her. **Postpartum is a team effort**, and she'll appreciate knowing you're in this together. Just be mindful of timing—don't pile your emotions onto her when she's at her breaking point. When conflicts arise (and they will), keep your tone calm and your words constructive.

Postpartum is not the time for defensiveness or keeping score. Approach disagreements with curiosity rather than criticism: "I feel like I didn't handle that well. How can I do better next time?"

# Communication: Conversation Starters

## 04

### Encourage Open Dialogue

If there's one thing I recommend as a postpartum doula, it's to keep the dialogue open between you & your partner.

Here are a few conversations to encourage connection.

1. ***"How are you really feeling today—physically, emotionally, or both?"***
2. ***"What's one thing I can do for you right now to make your day easier?"***
3. ***"What's the best/hardest thing about your day?"***
4. ***"Are you feeling okay about how your recovery is going? Is anything worrying you?"***
5. ***"How are you finding feeding so far? Is there anything I can do to make it easier?"***
6. ***"Is there anything we need to adjust or change to make things feel a bit easier for us both?"***

**Stay Open:** Create space for honest conversations and emotional vulnerability, for both her and yourself.

# Stepping Up at Home:

## 05



*Your partner is in full recovery mode, and your baby is adjusting to life on the outside. The house? It still needs running. Hopefully you already manage the home as equitably as possible, but right now, as mom focuses on nurturing your baby, this will fall more on you.*

*Stepping up at home during postpartum is about taking ownership,*

### *The Chore Playbook: Spot It*

Postpartum is not the time to wait for instructions or a chore list. The mental load of keeping track of everything—the laundry pile, the empty diaper bin, the growing stack of dishes—can be as draining as the physical work. Your job is to take that load off her plate.

***Spot It: Walk through the house like a detective. What needs doing? The key is noticing things before she does:***

- *Is the laundry basket overflowing? Put a load on.*
- *Are there dirty dishes in the sink? Wash them or load the dishwasher.*
- *Is the diaper bin full? Empty it.*
- *Are her postpartum supplies (pads, nipple cream, snacks) running low? Restock them.*

### *The Chore Playbook: Sort It*

- ***Sort It:*** Once you spot it, don't hesitate—***just sort it.*** Whether it's sweeping the floor or tidying up the clutter, handling the small things without being asked keeps the house running smoothly and shows her she's not carrying the burden alone.
- ***Prioritize:*** Not every chore needs doing immediately. Focus on the ones that impact her recovery and comfort first—clean sheets, a tidy kitchen, and fresh laundry go a long way in making the house feel manageable.

# Stepping Up At Home: FairPlay Method

## 05

### What Is The FairPlay Method?

Developed by Eve Rodsky, the Fair Play Method is a simple way to make sure every task in your household has a clear “owner.” It’s not about splitting things 50/50 but about ensuring that both partners contribute in ways that feel fair and sustainable for your unique situation.

The key is taking **full ownership of tasks**—not just doing them, but also thinking about them and planning for them.

**For example:** If you “own” meals, you’re responsible for planning the grocery list, buying the food, cooking, and cleaning up after. If she “owns” baby’s clothing, she’s in charge of tracking what’s needed, buying new sizes, and organizing them.



# The Fair Play Method

## 05

### *Fair Play In Postpartum*

1. List All the Tasks:

***Sit down together and create a list of everything that needs to be done—chores, errands, baby care, and emotional labor. Don't skip the small things like ordering baby supplies or replying to family messages.***

2. Divide and Conquer:

***Decide who will own each task. Be realistic about your strengths and capacities right now. Maybe you take over meals, laundry, and household management, while she focuses on feeding the baby and recovery.***

3. Communicate Expectations:

***The person who owns a task is fully responsible for it—thinking, planning, and doing. This avoids the dreaded "Can you remind me to..." or "What do you want me to do about..."***

4. Reassess Weekly:

***Postpartum is a time of constant change. What worked last week might not work this week. Check in regularly to adjust your system as needed.***

## ***FAIR PLAY IN ACTION***

### ***Examples of Fair Play in Action***

- **Meals:**  
If you own this, you're planning the grocery list, shopping, cooking, and cleaning up. She doesn't need to think about it unless she wants to weigh in on preferences.
- **Laundry:**  
If you take laundry, it's on you to collect, wash, dry, fold, and put everything away. No "Where do you want this?"—you figure it out.
- **Baby Care:**  
Divide specific baby tasks like nighttime feedings, nappy changes, or doctor appointments so each parent knows their role without needing constant reminders.

# Visitor Patrol: Be Gatekeeping Like a Pro

## 05



Visitors are inevitable. Everyone wants to meet the baby, but your partner needs rest, not a house full of people, and your job is to protect that. Think of yourself as the family bouncer, gently but firmly setting boundaries.

*Here's How:*



### **Communicate Expectations:**

Have a conversation with your partner about what she wants. Does she want visitors at all? If so, when, and for how long? Make a plan together.

### **Set Boundaries:**

Politely let people know when visits aren't ideal. Use clear, kind phrases like:

"We're keeping visits short so mom can rest, but we'd love to see you for a quick hello." "Thanks for wanting to visit. Can we plan for next week when things settle a bit more?"

### **Limit Time:**

If visitors do come, be the one to watch the clock. When the visit starts running long, step in:

"It's been great to see you, but mom and baby need to rest now."

### **Run Interference:**

Take charge of entertaining visitors and handling questions, so she doesn't have to. Offer to hold the baby if she needs to step away or simply wants a moment to herself.

### **Say No When Needed:**

It's okay to say no to visitors, even well-meaning ones. Yes, even your mother. Your partner and baby come first. ***She doesn't owe anyone her postpartum.***

# Bonding With Your Baby

## 06



**YOU JUST BECAME A PARENT. CONGRATULATIONS :)**

These early weeks lay the groundwork for a relationship that will last a lifetime. So, let's talk about how to bond with your little one and own your role as a hands-on parent.

**Skin-to-Skin: Why It's Not Just for Moms** Skin-to-skin contact is one of the simplest yet most powerful ways to bond with your baby. When you hold them against your bare chest, their world makes sense. They feel your warmth, hear your heartbeat, and smell your scent—all of which help them **feel safe and loved**.

**This isn't just a mom thing.** It's for dads and partners too. Studies show it helps regulate your baby's temperature, heart rate, and breathing, and it releases oxytocin (**the love hormone**) in you as well. It's biology's way of helping you fall for your baby—and trust me, it works.

How to Do It:

- Strip down to your bare chest (baby in a diaper is fine).
- Lay your baby against your chest, cover them with a soft blanket, and sit quietly for 15–20 minutes.
- You can do this after feeds, during naps, or whenever your baby needs soothing.

**Pro Tip:** Skin-to-skin doesn't have to be all "zen and quiet." Throw on a game, binge your favorite show, or nap while you cuddle. The point is the connection, not the setting.

# Bonding With Your Baby

## 06

### Late-Night Feeds and Poop Duty: Owning Your Shift

Bonding isn't all cuddles and cuteness. Sometimes it's about showing up for the less glamorous jobs—like the 3 a.m. feeds or a diaper explosion that defies the laws of physics. These moments might not seem like much, but they're where trust and connection are built.

#### ***Owning the Late-Night Shift:***

If your baby is bottle-fed, take turns feeding them at night. This gives your partner a chance to rest and lets you have one-on-one time with your little one.

If she's breastfeeding, you can still play a big role. Get up with her, bring the baby to her, handle burping, and settle the baby back to sleep while she crashes.



#### ***Poop Patrol:***

Be the first to step up when the diaper needs changing. Yes, even the bad ones. Especially the bad ones. Make it part of your routine—during your shift, after feeds, or whenever your baby needs a fresh start.

# Bonding With Your Baby

## 06

Here's the secret no one tells you: babies are little communicators. They can't talk, but they're constantly giving you clues about what they need. Your job is to pay attention and learn to read them too.

### *Learning the Cues: How to Read Your Baby*

#### **The Main Cues to Look For:**

- **Hunger:** Rooting (turning their head and opening their mouth), sucking on their hands, or fussing.
- **Tiredness:** Staring into space, rubbing their eyes, or getting fussy.
- **Overstimulation:** Turning their head away, crying suddenly, or stiffening their body.
- **Needing Comfort:** General fussiness that doesn't match hunger or tiredness—sometimes, they just want to be close to you.



Partner's can sometimes feel like they're on the sidelines in postpartum as babies mostly want mom, but learning your babies cues means you actually get the chance to step in when you can. And don't ever take it personally if they don't respond to you and want their mommy instead, this is totally normal. You'll get your chance to shine!

# NAVIGATING INTIMACY IN POSTPARTUM 07

# INTIMACY

Let's cut to the chase: you're wondering when it's safe to have sex again. The truth? It depends, and it's not just about a six-week green light from the doctor. If you push for answers or rush the process, you're going to hurt your relationship, not help it. So let's break it down in a way that makes sense—and keeps things real.

## 1. The Physical Healing Timeline

*First off, yes, there's a medical side to this. Most doctors or midwives recommend waiting at least 4-6 weeks after birth before having sex. Why?*

- Her body is healing from either vaginal tears or a C-section.
- There's a higher risk of infection immediately postpartum.
- Hormones and sleep deprivation are wreaking havoc on her libido.

*But here's the kicker: six weeks isn't a magic "all-clear" for every woman. Her body might or might not heal in that time, but her mind and emotions might not be on the same page yet.*

## 2. Emotional Safety Comes First

*Here's the reality: women need emotional connection toward physical intimacy. After birth, her sense of safety, trust, and love need to be rock solid before she'll feel like having sex.*

### **How to Build Emotional Safety:**

- Step as an as an incredible teammate and show up emotionally: Ask how she's feeling and listen without judgment or trying to fix it.
- Help at home: Handle chores, feed the baby, and make her feel like you're her teammate.
- When she feels safe and supported, intimacy becomes something she wants, not something she's pressured into.

## 3. Keep the Conversation Chill

*Talking about sex after birth doesn't have to feel like walking on eggshells. The key is to keep it low-pressure and open-ended.*

### *How to Bring It Up Without Being That Guy:*

- Start with curiosity: "How are you feeling about everything? Are you comfortable talking about intimacy?"
- Share your feelings: "I miss being close to you, but I want to make sure we're both ready before we take that step."
- Respect her answer. If she's not ready, accept it. The fastest way to ruin this is by making her feel guilty or rushed.

### *What Not to Do:*

- Don't turn it into a transaction: "I've been helping out more—when can we have sex?" That's not how it works.
- Don't compare: "Well, I heard so-and-so's wife was ready after four weeks!" Every woman's experience is different.

# Navigating Intimacy In Postpartum

## 07

### Other Ways to Connect (When Sex Is Off the Table)

**Look**, just because sex isn't happening right now doesn't mean intimacy is gone. There are plenty of ways to stay connected and build that bond while she's healing:

- **Physical Touch Matters:** Hold hands, cuddle on the couch, give her a back rub. Non-sexual touch goes a long way in making her feel loved. **Mini**
- **Date Nights:** Put the baby to bed, order her favorite take out, and hang out, just the two of you.
- **Be Her Hype Man:** Tell her she's an amazing mom, that you're proud of her, and that you love her.

*These little things remind you both that intimacy is about more than just sex.*

When It's Time (and How to Do It Right)

When she is ready to have sex again, make sure it's a good experience for both of you. Here's how:

- **Take It Slow:** Her body might feel different, and she might be nervous. Let her set the pace.
- **Check In:** During and after, ask how she's feeling and adjust if she's uncomfortable.
- **Keep Expectations Realistic:** The first time postpartum might not feel like fireworks, it's a new beginning, not a Hollywood scene.

**Yes, you'll have sex again.** But if you want it to happen in a way that strengthens your relationship. Be patient, be present, and know that when the time is right, it'll mean more because **you took the time to do it right.**



A photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a grey hospital gown, holding a newborn baby wrapped in a white blanket. She is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression. The background shows a hospital room with wooden paneling and a window with blinds.

# Postpartum Is Just the Beginning

08

*Postpartum is where life as a family begins —and it's also where relationships often feel stretched thin.*

*This isn't about perfect communication or having all the answers; it's about staying connected, growing together, and showing up for each other, even when it's hard.*

*Here's a toolkit of practical advice, tips, and strategies to help you keep the bond strong and navigate beyond postpartum as a team.*

# Postpartum Is Just The Beginning

## *Playing the Long Game*

### Tip 1: ***Focus on Small Wins, Not Big Goals***

In postpartum, life shrinks to the basics: eat, sleep, feed, repeat. Instead of chasing big wins, focus on the small things that keep you moving forward:

- Celebrate little victories: “We survived a night with three wake-ups. High five!”
- Make time for small moments of joy: ***sharing a cup of coffee, having a laugh over something ridiculous, or enjoying 10 minutes of quiet together.***

### ***Tip 2: Reframe “This Is Forever” Thinking***

The exhaustion and chaos can feel endless, but it’s not. When it gets overwhelming, remind each other:

- “This is just a season.” Baby sleep improves, the house gets calmer, and routines return. ***Focus on what’s now and not what’s next.***

### ***Tip 3: Have a “Family Huddle” Once a Week***

- Pick a time each week (Sunday mornings over coffee works well) to check in and plan ahead. Talk about what’s working, what’s not, and how you can support each other.
  - “What was hard for you this week? How can I help?”
  - “Let’s look at the calendar—when can we make time for us?”
- Keep it short and simple. Think of it as a ***team reset*** for the week ahead.



**YOU**

**ARE**

**A**

**TEAM**

# Postpartum Is Just The Beginning

## *Practical Habits to Keep Connection Strong*

1. *Daily Hug or Cuddle: Physical touch, even brief, helps rebuild intimacy when sex is off the table.*
2. *Laugh Together: Watch something funny, share a joke, or laugh at the chaos—it's good for both of you.*
3. *Share a Meal Together: Even if it's on the sofa with the baby next to you, sit down and eat together when you can.*
4. *Trade Breaks: Schedule time where each of you gets a moment to breathe. Small breaks help you come back stronger.*
5. *Say Thank You—Often: Acknowledging each other's efforts changes everything.*



**YOU**

**ARE**

**A**

**TEAM**

# RESOURCES FOR PARTNERS

## BONUS

To help you feel empowered, informed, and prepared, here's a collection of resources tailored specifically for new dads and partners.

### **Books for New Dads**

1. **The Birth Partner** by Penny Simkin
  - o A comprehensive guide for anyone supporting a birthing person, with practical advice for postpartum care and emotional support.
2. **The New Father: A Dad's Guide to the First Year** by Armin A. Brott
  - o A practical and humorous guide covering everything from baby care to relationship dynamics.
3. **We're Pregnant! The First-Time Dad's Pregnancy Handbook** by Adrian Kulp
  - o A step-by-step guide that includes postpartum tips and advice on supporting your partner.
4. **How Not to Hate Your Husband After Kids** by Jancee Dunn
  - o A funny, honest look at how parenthood changes relationships and practical strategies for navigating it together.
5. **Dude, You're Gonna Be a Dad!** by John Pfeiffer
  - o A lighthearted yet insightful book for new dads navigating pregnancy, birth, and the early days of fatherhood.

### **Websites and Online Communities**

1. **Fatherly**
  - o Articles, tips, and resources on parenting, relationships, and self-care for dads.
  - o Website: [www.fatherly.com](http://www.fatherly.com)
2. **The Dad Edge**
  - o A supportive community and podcast offering strategies for thriving as a father and partner.
  - o Website: [www.thedadedge.com](http://www.thedadedge.com)
3. **Daddilife**
  - o Focused on modern fatherhood, with guides on baby care, mental health, and work-life balance.
  - o Website: [www.daddilife.com](http://www.daddilife.com)
4. **Postpartum Support International (PSI)**
  - o Offers resources for partners on supporting a loved one through postpartum, as well as mental health support for dads.
  - o Website: [www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)

# RESOURCES FOR PARTNERS

## BONUS

To help you feel empowered, informed, and prepared, here's a collection of resources tailored specifically for new dads and partners.

### **Podcasts for Dads**

1. The Dad Pod
  - o A podcast focusing on the ups and downs of fatherhood, with humor and actionable advice.
2. Fatherhood Podcast
  - o Stories and insights from dads navigating parenting, relationships, and personal growth.
3. The Modern Dads Podcast
  - o Covers topics like mental health, co-parenting, and building strong partnerships as a father.
4. Dads After Dark Show
  - o A laid-back podcast for dads, blending relatable stories with tips for balancing fatherhood.

### **Mental Health Resources for Dads**

1. Movember
  - o Offers resources on men's mental health, including postpartum challenges for dads.
  - o Website: [www.movember.com](http://www.movember.com)
2. Postpartum Support International (PSI)
  - o Provides information and support groups for partners experiencing postpartum depression or anxiety.
3. Heads Up Guys
  - o Focused on helping men navigate depression, with practical tools and a directory for professional help.
  - o Website: [www.headsupguys.org](http://www.headsupguys.org)

### **Instagram Accounts for New Dads**

1. @father\_of\_daughters
  - o A hilarious and relatable account sharing real-life fatherhood moments.
2. @thedadvocate
  - o Advocates for active fatherhood and shares insights on parenting and relationships.
3. @dadsdontbabysit
  - o Challenges stereotypes about fatherhood and celebrates dads as equal parents.
- 4.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

## You Are An Amazing Partner

Postpartum is where the real work of partnership begins. It's not just about surviving the sleepless nights or ticking off chores, it's about staying connected, growing alongside each other, and learning to navigate this new chapter as a team.

Focus on the small, consistent efforts that matter: checking in, stepping up, and showing appreciation. These habits are what strengthen your relationship, not just now, but for the long run. There's no perfect way to do this, but as long as you're both showing up, listening, and adapting, you'll figure it out together. Keep the lines of communication open, give yourselves grace, and remember: you're on the same side, and you're building something solid, your family :)



-Olivia @foxandcubfamilywellness