

FREE MODULE

Maximizing Your Hospital Stay After Birth



Rx Postpartum

YOUR PRESCRIPTION FOR
AN ELEVATED
POSTPARTUM

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An Insider's Guide to Maximizing Your Hospital Stay After Birth

Becoming a mom means maximizing every ounce of time and resource you have at your disposal. This begins right after birth!

The goal is to enter your postpartum journey with a confident mind and peaceful heart.

The first 24-48 hours after birth is a whirlwind of emotion and experience. You will try so hard to soak it all in and there is so much coming at you, that it is virtually impossible to keep your thoughts together. We have developed a simple plan to help you make the most of your hospital stay after birth and it doesn't even require packing the perfect hospital bag!

STEP ONE: ASK QUESTIONS

You will have a visit with your doctor or midwife and pediatrician every day while you are in the hospital after delivery. Usually these visits occur in the early morning. During these visits, you will have the undivided attention of the provider. This is your time to ask questions! Bring a notebook with you to the hospital, and when a question pops in your head, write it down. You may be exhausted, emotionally overwhelmed and uncomfortable (no matter how you deliver). It may be hard to remember your questions! Pro tip: record your answers in the same notebook, so that in 5 minutes, when you don't remember what the provider told you, you can refer back to your answers with confidence.

Knowledge breeds confidence.

Common questions to ask:

MATERNAL WELLBEING	NEWBORN WELLBEING
When can I bathe?	How many wet diapers / poop diapers should I expect each day?
What can I take for pain?	How often and how much should the baby feed?
How do I care for.... (vaginal tear, c-section scar, hemorrhoids, etc.)?	Is crying ok?
What problems should I look out for?	Why does the baby want to feed so frequently? Is this normal?
When will my milk come in?	How do I care for the umbilical cord?
Why are my legs swollen?	How much weight will the baby lose?
When can I drive?	How often should I bathe my baby?

STEP TWO: SLEEP

Such a simple concept, but it becomes WAY more complicated with a newborn. It is imperative to preserve your ability to get uninterrupted sleep, and it begins in the hospital. Take the opportunity to tank up on sleep while you are fully supported in the hospital, so that when you go home and you don't have quite as much support and the responsibilities of life start to tug at you, you are as rested as you can be. **Your goal is to get 2-3 hours of uninterrupted sleep at least once during the day and at least once at night.**

Make your sleep a priority

Tips for getting better sleep:

- * Sleep during the day. You will not be able to catch up on sleep at night. Most babies will have their days and nights mixed up and will spend the day sleeping and become more active at night. Keep the blinds closed. Wear an eye mask. Turn on a white noise machine. Turn off the TV.
- * Schedule sleep sessions around baby's sleep and feeding. Until you and your baby develop a more consistent routine as your baby matures, you will be scheduling your sleep schedule around your baby's schedule. Especially in the hospital, when your baby is sleeping, you should be sleeping too.
- * Trade off baby duty with your partner or support person. Have this person hold the baby skin to skin, change the baby, and rock the baby while you nap.
- * Ask the nurses to schedule vitals and wellbeing checks around naps. Limit the number of times the staff and visitors enter your room when you are trying to sleep. This will help encourage uninterrupted blocks of sleep.

STEP THREE: MEET WITH A LACTATION CONSULTANT

For many women, breast feeding does not come easy. In the first few weeks, it is physically and emotionally demanding. The first 24-72 hours after birth are critical in establishing good breastfeeding habits. Most hospitals have a lactation consultant on staff, however, the lactation consultant may not automatically meet with each new mom at the hospital. Prior to going into labor, ask your physician/midwife or call the hospital to find out if there is a lactation consultant on staff. If there is a lactation consultant be sure to ask the nurses to set up a consultation. You should meet with the lactation consultant at least once a day until you are sent home, but you can certainly ask to be seen more than once. The latch is one of the key components of breastfeeding. Be sure that you are comfortable with your baby's latch prior to leaving the hospital. If not, speak with the pediatrician as well as the lactation consultant to get more help.

There are many different ways to hold the baby during breastfeeding. Have the lactation consultant review all of the different options and practice, practice, practice! This will help build your confidence for breastfeeding at home. Take notes on which positions work best for you and your baby.

BREASTFEEDING POSITION	BABY'S RESPONSE TO POSITION

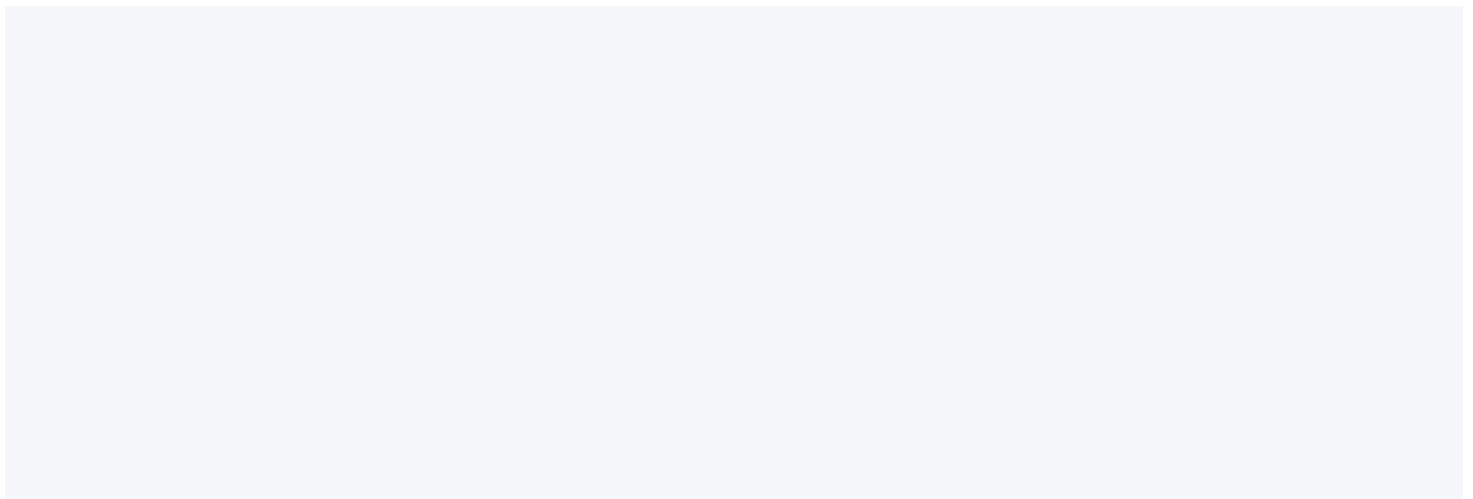
If there is no lactation consultant on staff at the hospital, then meet with one before you go into labor. If possible, meet virtually with that person again while you are in the hospital after delivery.

STEP FOUR: LET THE NURSES HELP YOU

Let the nurses help care for you and the baby. You don't have to do it all! You just spent the past 9-10 months being pregnant and then you birthed a baby. You need time to recover. The nurses are there for you. They are there for physical, mental and emotional support. Your nurse can do anything from helping you change your undergarments to helping you shower, and everything in between. Your nurse is an advocate for you and a fabulous source of knowledge. In fact, nurses are master baby swaddlers. Ask your nurse to teach you to swaddle the baby and practice while they watch. Allow your nurse to teach you bathing techniques for you and your baby.

STEP FIVE: PROCESS YOUR BIRTH STORY

For many women their birth story is not what they had planned for or expected. It is important to spend some time reflecting on your birth story and begin wrapping your head around the events. Your perception of your birth story can have a profound effect on your postpartum journey and future pregnancies. Understanding the events of your birth story and why they occurred are vital in mental and emotional processing. While you are still surrounded by the people that can help you work through the process, start that journey. Have a candid conversation with your physician or midwife about your birth. Ask questions and record your answers. Write your birth story out on paper (or type it out below) to help begin to process your experience.



STEP SIX: KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Be sure to know your vital signs, particularly your blood pressure. Know what your blood pressure readings are throughout your postpartum stay. If you have high blood pressure or preeclampsia, review the precautions you need to be aware of with the nurse and physician prior to release from the hospital.

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
BLOOD PRESSURE			
HEART RATE			
TEMPERATURE			

STEP SEVEN: FOLLOW UP VISITS

Line up your follow up appointments prior to leaving the hospital. Make your first pediatrician visit, your lactation consultant visit, and your postpartum visit. Set reminders in your phone!

	DAY	TIME	NOTES
OB/GYN (OR MIDWIFE)			
PEDIATRICIAN			
LACTATION CONSULTANT			
PELVIC FLOOR PHYSICAL THERAPIST			

STEP EIGHT: ASK FOR HELP

Reach out and ask for help. You will never be surrounded by as many supportive, knowledgeable people that are positioned to help you in more ways than you can imagine. This is a great time to advocate for yourself. Speak up and ASK. If you are struggling with asking for help, talk to your partner or support person so they can advocate on your behalf.

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