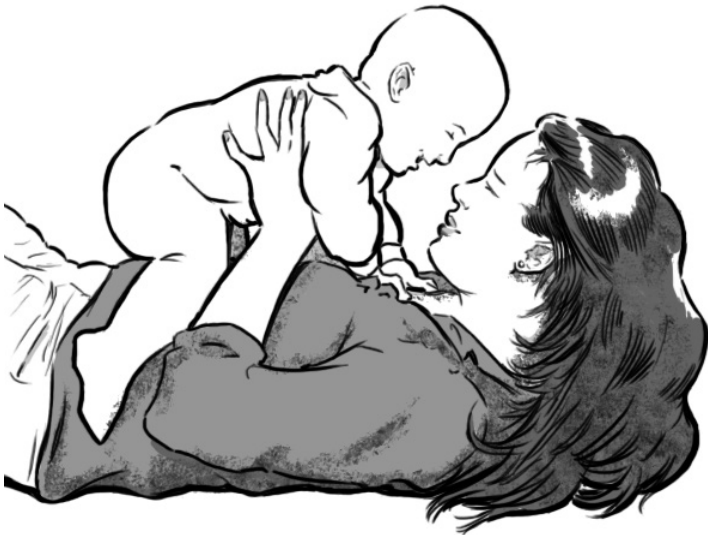


A Patient's Guide to **Going Home After Baby**



Disclaimer

This material is for informational purposes only. It does not replace the advice or counsel of a doctor or health care professional. Providence Health Care makes every effort to provide information that is accurate and timely, but makes no guarantee in this regard. You should consult with, and rely only on the advice of, your physician or health care professional.

The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team.

Going Home After Baby

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The information in this book has been adapted from a number of sources -
our thanks to all.

References available upon request.

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This material has been
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Please take your Discharge Summary when you see your doctor/midwife at your routine newborn visit.

Write down any questions and take them with you as well.

There is additional space for notes at the back of this booklet.

Do you have these items?

- Discharge Summary
- Breastfeeding pamphlet
- Follow Up Appointments

(Mom) Date: _____

(Baby) Date: _____

Discharge Feeding Plan: _____

Comments or concerns to share with your doctor/midwife: _____

CARING FOR YOUR BABY

Breastfeeding in the First Few Days

To build your breast milk supply, your baby will have no set routine. Your baby will feed every 1 to 3 hours throughout the day and night. Often babies feed every hour or more for several hours, usually at night. This is called “cluster feeding.” Check your baby’s diaper often and make note of how many wet and dirty diapers they have. You should see your family doctor or midwife for a routine newborn visit within 3 to 5 days after you go home.

Fussy Baby

It is common for babies to cry often. Babies need skin-to-skin contact, carrying and cuddling. These things may help comfort your baby. Other family members can also do these things to help care for your baby. Feeding your baby often can also help.

Caring for a fussy baby can be tiring and difficult. Read the information in the **Period of PURPLE Crying** pamphlet and at *www.purplecrying.info*. Use the link in the pamphlet to watch the video.

Safer Sleep

You should never share a sleeping surface with your baby (for example, in your bed or on the couch). Having your baby sleep in your room where you can reach them in their crib or bassinet is recommended.



Refer to your **Safer Sleep Pamphlet** for more information about how to make sure your baby is sleeping safely.

Umbilical Cord and Clamp Care

The umbilical cord stump will usually fall off in 5 to 15 days. Keep the cord clean and dry to prevent infection. (An infected belly button looks red, swollen, or has pus coming from it.) Continue to clean the belly button (umbilicus) for a few days after the cord falls off. You may see a small amount of blood when it detaches. (Use water on a washcloth to clean gently around the base of the cord.) Fold the diaper below the cord to stop irritation, and to keep it dry and exposed to air.

Jaundice

It is common for your baby's skin and the whites of the eyes to get yellow (jaundiced) after 24 hours of age. This should go away in a day or two. Breastfeeding your baby 8 or more times in 24 hours can help jaundice go away.

Jaundice may make your baby very sleepy and make it difficult to feed them. Give your baby your expressed milk if they are too sleepy to feed. Get help to make sure your baby is feeding well; speak with your family doctor, midwife or public health nurse.

Vitamin D

Health Canada recommends all breastfed or partially breastfed healthy, full term babies get a vitamin D supplement of 400 IU every day, from birth until 12 months of age. Babies who are born pre-term also need vitamin D. Please check with your baby's care provider about how much vitamin D your baby should be given. Babies fed only formula do not need extra vitamin D as it is added to the formula.

Immunizations

Your public health nurse will give you information about immunizations for you and your baby.








EMERGENCY

Call a doctor or midwife right away, go to the Emergency Department or call 911 if:

- Your baby has a fever (temperature over 38°C) – Do NOT use a rectal thermometer
- Your baby is not behaving normally. For example, you cannot wake your baby, or your baby is awake but limp.
- Your baby is having difficulty breathing. For example, your baby is blue or purple in the face.

Take your baby to see your family doctor or midwife if:

- Your baby is not interested in feeding, or you have problems waking your baby to feed, or both.
- Your baby feeds constantly, but is not content after feeds.
- Your baby cries all the time, and cannot be comforted.
- Your baby's eyes take on a yellowish colour, or yellow skin colour spreads from the face to the rest of body, or both.
- You are concerned about an infection at the belly button.
- You are concerned about how many wet or dirty diapers your baby has:
 - Less than 4 wet diapers per day after 3 to 4 days of age.
 - Less than 2 or 3 bowel movements a day, after 3 to 4 days of age in the first 3 weeks.
 - Bowel movements that are not within the expected normal range. (Please refer to the **BC Infant Stool Card** provided in your discharge envelope in hospital for normal and abnormal stool colours.)
- Your baby has projectile, forceful vomiting. (Gentle "spit ups" are normal.)

Guidelines for nursing mothers							
1 week							
Your Baby's Age	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days	5, 6, 7 days	2 weeks	3 weeks
How often do I breastfeed? <i>Per day, on average, over 24 hours.</i>	 <p>At least 8 feeds per day (every 1 to 3 hours). Your baby is sucking strongly, slowly, steadily and swallowing often.</p>						
How big is my baby's tummy? <i>*approximate</i>	 5 - 7 ml Marble	 22 - 27 ml Ping pong ball	 60-80 ml Egg				
How many wet diapers will my baby have? <i>Per day, on average, over 24 hours.</i> <i>*clear pale yellow urine</i>	At least 1 WET	At least 2 WET	At least 3 WET	At least 4 WET	At least 4 WET	At least 6 HEAVY WET	
How many soiled diapers will my baby have? <i>Per day, on average, over 24 hours.</i>	 At least 1 - 2 black or dark green	 At least 2 - 3 brown, green or yellow	 At least 2 - 3 soft and seedy yellow				
How much will my baby weigh?	Your baby may lose 7 - 10% of it's birth weight in the first 3 days after birth.		Your baby gains 20 - 35 grams (2/3 to 1 1/3 oz.) per day, and regains his/her birth weight by 10 - 14 days.		Your baby now gains 120 - 240 grams (4 to 8 oz.) per week.		
Other signs.	Your baby has a strong cry, moves actively and wakes easily. Your breasts feel softer and less full after a feeding. After a few weeks, it is normal for your breasts to feel soft and still have lots of milk.						

Adapted with the permission of the Perinatal Services BC.

In the Next Few Days

The vaginal bleeding and pain should become less, and nipple discomfort should improve. Most women who have a vaginal birth need some pain medicine regularly for a few days to a few weeks. Most women who have a Caesarean birth need some pain medicine regularly for about one month. If you take your pain medication regularly for the first week, then usually you will take less overall. Your doctor or midwife will go over the medications you should take when you are home. If the medications are not strong enough to manage your pain, talk to your doctor or midwife.

Once you leave the hospital after the birth, make sure to call your doctor or midwife to book a follow-up appointment soon after you leave the hospital. If you had a Caesarean birth, you will also need to book an appointment with the obstetrician for a visit 6 to 8 weeks after the surgery.

After Every Birth

- You should avoid baths. (Sitz baths are okay.)
- Do not use tampons until your bleeding stops.
- Do not douche. This is never a good idea.
- Do not have intercourse (sex) until your bleeding has stopped (usually within 6 weeks) and you feel ready.

Sitz Bath

A warm, shallow bath used to clean the perineum (area between the vagina and anus). You can either fill your bath tub with 10-15 cm of warm water or use a specially designed basin that fits in the top of your toilet. You then sit on the basin, or sit or kneel in the tub for 10 to 15 minutes. Some people like to add Epsom salts or baking soda to the water. Use a spoonful for a basin or a 1/2 cup for a bath tub.

- Use a birth control method, such as condoms, until you talk with your doctor or midwife about other choices. You can get pregnant even if you have not had your period.

After a Vaginal Birth

- Use your peri-bottle (plastic squeeze bottle you received when in hospital), whenever you go to the bathroom, to keep the perineum clean, especially if you have a tear or an episiotomy. The stitches will dissolve in 2 to 3 weeks. They do not need to be removed.
- You may use a sitz bath 2 or 3 times each day to help keep the area clean and decrease pain.

After a Caesarean birth

- You may shower with the Steri-Strips (paper tapes) on. Leave them on until they fall off.
- If you have staples, they are usually removed 2 or 3 days after your surgery while you are still in hospital. If you are having them taken out after discharge, call your public health nurse, family doctor or midwife to make an appointment to have them taken out. Make sure that you receive a staple remover from your nurse and take it home with you.
- Do not lift anything heavier than the baby for the next 2 weeks, and nothing heavier than the baby and carrier for the next 4 weeks.
- Do not drive for 2 weeks.
- Do not exercise your stomach muscles until after discussing with your doctor or midwife at your 6 week visit.

Caring for Yourself,

continued next page

Self-Care

Nutrition:

- Continue to take a daily multivitamin with folic acid.
- Get enough fluids. Whenever you feed your baby, have a glass of water, milk, or juice.
- Follow **Canada's Food Guide** for healthy eating.

Rest:

- Sleep when your baby sleeps.
- Reduce the number of things you do in a day while you get used to your new baby.
- Ask others to help with daily chores.

Medication & Other Substances:

- Make sure that you have any pain medications or bowel care medications you may need. Acetaminophen, ibuprofen (pain medications), and docusate (stool softener) are all available over the counter without a prescription. (Stool softeners make having a bowel movement (poo) more comfortable.) Other stronger pain medications require a doctor's prescription.
- If you need to take medication or herbal products after having your baby, and you are breastfeeding, please check with your midwife, doctor or pharmacist to make sure it is safe for your baby.
- Some medications and other substances (for example, alcohol, cannabis, and street drugs) can make you less aware of your baby, your baby's needs, and your own needs. It is best to avoid using these substances. Talk to your midwife, doctor or public health nurse to make sure you have safety plans if you intend to use anything that may affect your awareness of your baby, yourself, or both of you.
- Smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke have

long-term health effects for both you and your baby. If you smoke and are thinking about stopping, your family doctor or public health unit can provide you with resources. Reduce exposure to second-hand smoke by not smoking inside the house. People who smoke should wash their hands and change their over-shirt before handling your baby.

Breast Care:

- Wash your hands with soap and water before touching your breasts.
- Let your nipples and breasts be exposed to air as much as possible. Let your nipples air dry after each feed.
- Change nursing pads frequently, especially if they become wet.
- Make sure your bra is supportive and fits well. It should not leave marks on your breasts.
- If your nipples are sore or damaged (cracked, bleeding, blistered) talk to your public health nurse, midwife or doctor, or a lactation consultant.

Bleeding

Following the baby's birth there will be bleeding and discharge from the vagina. This flow will usually last from 2 to 6 weeks. In the first 2 to 3 days, this flow is dark red with small clots about the size of a loonie (one-dollar coin). It should soak less than 1 maxi-pad in 2 hours and not smell bad. Over time the flow becomes less and turns brownish to pinkish in colour. After around the tenth day, the discharge is yellowish-white or brown.

You may notice menstrual-like cramping, a small gush of blood, or both, during or after breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding

Please refer to your breastfeeding pamphlet for detailed information.

Perinatal Anxiety & Depression

As a new parent there are many changes you will be experiencing, such as lack of sleep, changes in your relationship with your partner, and learning how to care for your new baby. Many parents can feel stressed, anxious or worried about these changes. Sometimes, new parents can experience depression, anxiety, or both due to these changes. Signs of depression or anxiety can start in pregnancy or even up to one year after the baby is born.

Baby Blues:

“Baby blues” are very common. You may feel restless, irritable, tearful, tired, discouraged, sad, or helpless. You may also have mood swings where you suddenly feel happy, full of energy or want to talk a lot. Most of the time the baby blues do not last very long, and goes away on its own within 2 weeks.

Postpartum Depression:

Symptoms can be feeling very tired and overwhelmed, unable to look after yourself or your baby, having mood swings, or feeling like you no longer enjoy the things you used to.

Perinatal Anxiety:

You might feel constantly worried that something bad might happen to your baby, trouble sleeping (insomnia), being easily startled, panic attacks, or feeling edgy or moody.

*If you are concerned this is happening to you, PLEASE, get professional advice and always remember to ask for help!
(Your friends and family are a great source of help!)*

EMERGENCY

Call a doctor or midwife right away, go to the Emergency Department or call 911 if:

- You have chest pain, shortness of breath, or pain, swelling and warmth in the back of the lower leg. This may be a clot in the lungs or in the leg.
- Your bleeding is more than your heaviest menstrual period, or you fill a pad in an hour or less.
- You are having thoughts of hurting yourself, hurting your baby or others.

See your family doctor or midwife if:

- Your bleeding is getting heavier than a usual menstrual period, even after rest, or starts again.
- Your vaginal flow has a bad smell.
- You have a fever (temperature over 38°C), chills or flu-like symptoms.
- Your stitches, or incision, open up or drain, the skin around them becomes more red, or you have pain that is getting worse.
- You have a red, hot, or painful lump in your breast, or cracked painful nipples.
- You have pain, burning or both when you urinate (pee).
- You have difficulty having a bowel movement (poo).
- You are concerned that your mood is low, or that the baby blues are not improving.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Parenting Resources

Parenting Resources – Information for Pregnancy and Parenting

<http://parenting.vch.ca>

Baby's Best Chance – Parent's Handbook of Pregnancy and Baby Care

<http://bit.ly/2iByo0e>

Healthy Families BC – Health and Wellness Resources, Breastfeeding Resources

www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca

Period of Purple Crying – Information on Sleeping, Soothing, Crying and Protecting

www.purplecrying.info

Safe Sleep – Public Health Agency of Canada

<http://bit.ly/2jaGNh2>

Healthy Family BC

<https://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/blog/safer-sleep-your-baby>

BC Ministry of Health

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2017/safer-sleep-for-my-baby.pdf>

Car Seat Safety – Government of Canada

<http://bit.ly/2hS1FcZ>

BCAA

<https://www.bcaa.com/community/child-car-seat-safety>

Perinatal Services of BC – Health Information: Pregnancy, Labour & Birth and Newborn Care

<http://bit.ly/2iEZ9nh>

Health Resources

Your Community Health Center

Contact your Public Health Unit to find out about availability and resources.

HealthLink BC Nurses Line – 24/7 Health Advice You Can Trust

www.healthlinkbc.ca or Dial 8-1-1

Breastfeeding Resources

La Leche league

www.lllc.ca or 604-520-4623

BC Women’s Provincial Milk Bank

<http://bcwomensmilkbank.ca> or 604-875-2424 (local 7634)

Breastfeeding Latch Clinic at BC Women’s Hospital

<http://www.bcwomens.ca/our-services/labour-birth-post-birth-care/breastfeeding-clinic>

Bloom Breastfeeding Center

www.bloomcommunitymidwives.com or 604-609-3550

A Lactation Consultant in your community

Ask your family doctor or registered midwife
(private fee)

Vancouver Breastfeeding Center

You will need a referral from your family doctor or midwife

My Breastfeeding Buddy by PSBC and Healthy Families

<https://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/breastfeeding-buddy>





How you want to be treated.

www.providencehealthcare.org