

*The Key Ingredients to a Healthy Postpartum Recovery and Transition...*

- Rest
- Nutrition
- Support
- Protection

The first few days following childbirth are crucial to the health of new moms and babies. It is important that new moms and babies receive adequate rest, nutrition, support and protection to have a healthy recovery and get the best start.

When visitors or family come into our home we naturally want to make them feel welcome and we consider their comfort. It is easy for a mother who has given birth at home to forget that she needs the same recovery period as she would have been given in the hospital, to bring in her milk and allow her to bond effectively with the new baby. Please limit the amount of personal attention you ask for from the new mom right now. For the first week or so she will tire easily with talk and needs to sleep whenever the baby does.

That's easy for her to forget, so you'll need to remember! Its a good idea to limit talk-time to ten minutes and avoid tense subjects. Try to offer minimal advice, it can be overwhelming: wait for new parents to ASK.

Come and visit with a specific plan to be helpful to the new family - bring good food (sometimes treats are not very helpful), do laundry, wash dishes, run errands, take care of pets, take older children out for awhile for some special attention.

If you have presents for the new baby, bring something nice for the other child(ren), and recognize their important new role. Greet young children in the home before you make much of the new baby - let them introduce you or update you on the baby. Nip the idea of jealousy in the bud by not even suggesting it! Rather, expect them to be *helpful and protective* of the new baby.

Always wash hands before touching the new baby! This includes EVERYONE who comes to visit but is especially true for children - babies don't break - but they do get sick.

Small children can certainly hold the baby, but their hands MUST be clean and they should be taught not to kiss baby's face (the top of the baby's head smells wonderful - kiss there).

Remember - you are taking care of the mom so she can take care of the baby, never the other way around. It is okay to hold baby for short periods of 5 to 10 minutes at a time, but remember to limit separating baby from mom or dad, especially in the first few weeks.

Be sensitive to the privacy needs of the new family. If you are staying for an extending time, more than half a day, don't presume entrance into bedrooms or bathrooms, even if you were called in to help a few hours before. New parents will feel respected if you ask first. New parents need to process their thoughts together periodically throughout the day. Consider taking a short walk or running errands as needed.