

# My Perinatal Planner

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Coronavirus Edition

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New Baby Network CIC



## Welcome to your perinatal planner!

### Who Are We?

We are the New Baby Network, which is a very grand name for two mum friends who found the transition to motherhood incredibly intense and isolating. We both felt that with the right support and information, neither of us needed to feel like this. With this planner, we would love for you to go into the months after your baby is born armed with an understanding of what will change. Despite current restrictions and differences due to Covid-19, you can enjoy your time together with your baby.

Wishing you a beautiful perinatal period even in the time of physical distancing,

*Ellie and  
Brianna x*

## **How to use your planner**

The planner is divided into 7 sections: my network; my body; my mind; my supporter; my home; my work/finances; out and about. Start it as early as you like and update it as often as you feel necessary. The useful links in each section are a great starting point if you're not sure what to write. Talk to your health professionals, partner, friends and family to help you work out your thoughts and preferences. Each part has some guided questions to start you off, but expand as much as you need to and ignore the things that don't work for you. Keep it somewhere both you and your supporters can easily access it, and don't forget to look at it when baby is here!

## **What do we mean by perinatal?**

'Perinatal' means the period of time covering your pregnancy and up to roughly a year after giving birth. It's made up of two parts:

peri meaning 'around'

natal meaning 'birth'

You might have also heard terms used to describe the time specifically before or after giving birth, such as:

postnatal or postpartum meaning 'after birth'

antenatal or prenatal meaning 'before birth'

There's no right or wrong word to describe the period of time around pregnancy and after birth, and you might hear your doctor or midwife use any of these.

It's worth mentioning here that all services offered to you during your pregnancy and beyond are optional. You hold all the cards and the final decision on any aspect of your care lies with you and your birth partner if you have one. It can feel like a lot of responsibility, but can also be very empowering. We hope this planner can go some way to helping you feel informed and in control.

# For the Lockdown Babies

by Gráinne Evans

"Sure you were only a baby" I'll tell her when she asks,  
About that time in photographs when everyone wore masks.  
"You don't remember the chaos when the world was forced to rest."

"You had all you needed in my arms and at my breast"

"You never even noticed" I'll tell her then I'll say,  
"I held you as the weeks went by, we took it day by day"  
"We were safe and happy, right where we needed to be".  
"I fed you snuggled in my arms, protecting you was key".



Photo by [Kelly Sikkema](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Photo by [Damir Spanic](#) on [Unsplash](#)

"You were only a tiny baby" I'll tell her and explain,  
Why so many people were afraid, anxious and in pain.  
"It wasn't always easy, those isolating newborn days,  
But feeding you flooded me with love, got me through the haze".

"You were a lockdown baby" I'll tell her when it's time,  
"I was your whole world back then, just as you were mine",  
"And now, though it's just a memory, I still smile when I see,  
A rainbow in a window, put there for you and me."

## **Useful links for pregnancy and postpartum in the time of Covid-19**

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/navigating-pregnancy-during-coronavirus-disease-covid-19-pandemic>

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/COVID-19/>

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/infant-feeding-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/>

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/>



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# My Network

## Family/Visitors

It can be helpful to think about who will be around to support you after birth. Find out about paternity leave now. In hospital your supporter will be able to help, and even if they need to return home from hospital before you and baby do, the health care professionals on your ward are there to offer you all the help you need during your stay. Depending on social distancing restrictions, you may not be able to have visitors at hospital and in your home, or those who you would like to visit may be vulnerable and unable to visit. In your plan factor in that you may have to self-isolate for covid-19 symptoms at some point.

Some families may consider combining households for the postpartum time, having a mother/mother-in-law move in, or moving in with parents/siblings.

Could this work for you and your family? Would this benefit you? Some may consider a self-isolation period before doing this. Bring up these questions with your partner and make sure you are on the same page.



Note down your preferences below:



Do you have older children? How can you get support with them?

Make a plan, and a back-up for the birth and postpartum period. Journeys to care for children and vulnerable people are considered essential travel. Can nursery/preschool/childminder offer any flexibility around the time of birth or the early days?

Jot your thoughts below:

## **Friends**

Do you know any friends or colleagues who will be on maternity leave/furlough at the same time as you? Perhaps you made a connection with another mother-to-be at a class or your neighbour is expecting. Why not ask for their contact details?

Even if you don't make a lasting connection, they may be able to introduce you into some of the groups or activities they love. Even knowing you have someone to meet on your walk or message during night feeds can be really reassuring and helpful!





Many services and organisations have moved their support groups to online platforms including children and family centres, breastfeeding peers, baby massage and postnatal yoga. They are still there for you to use during the pandemic.

If you are planning antenatal classes including yoga etc. ask about the ways they keep parents connected and you may find they offer WhatsApp groups, online Zoom socials, closed Facebook groups or other opportunities to meet and connect. You may also find specific groups for multiples (twins/triplets etc.), disabled parents, single parents or specific locations.

Your midwife or health visiting team may be able to give some information on this as well.

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/bumpsandbabies.isolationssupportnetworkmidlands/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/COVID19Babies/>

Sometimes, babies arrive early or are poorly when they are born. There are lots of resources out there to support you during this time and some excellent support groups and networks. The health care professionals in the hospital and neonatal unit will be able to signpost you to the local groups for your area, and will support you through your stay.

Useful links:

<https://www.bliss.org.uk/>

<https://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/watch-small-wonders-online>

Animated guide to a stay in neonatal: <https://vimeo.com/333511423>

<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/premature-babies/>

## Feeding

Have you thought about how you'd like to feed your baby? It's worth remembering that breastfeeding at the breast, using expressed milk and formula feeding as well as any combination of the above is possible. Whatever your choices and circumstances there are lots of resources available to you. Your baby's red book often has a checklist and important information on feeding.



If you'd like to breastfeed, but for whatever reason need to give some formula, that doesn't have to be the end of breastfeeding for you. It is possible to return to breastfeeding after a break. If you need to take medications or have treatment see the [Drugs in Breastmilk](#) link at the end of the section for more information and help.



The guide to bottle feeding in the links at the end of the section has all the information you may need on how to formula feed your baby. You can find evidence based, independent information on choosing a formula milk on the [First Steps Nutrition Trust Website](#).

There are often lots available on the shelves, but it's worth knowing that most brands are very similar, and there is no evidence that "special" milks (like hungry baby, colic or reflux) will help. If you are worried about those things, a GP or health visitor can help you find out what may be best for you and your baby.

Means tested healthy start vouchers can be used to buy infant formula, and many pharmacies or supermarkets can order in and deliver it to you if needed.

Where can I find healthcare professional feeding support?

**Midwife phone number:**

**HV phone number:**

## **My nearest face to face\* support**

You can usually find out this information from your midwife/health visitor/hospital. Many areas also have local peer support, if you look for "breastfeeding support \*your location\*" you should find what you need. **Despite the name, they will also be able to support you with any formula or combination feeding related questions.**

**Day:**

**Time:**

**Venue:**

**Frequency:**

\*We've kept this section in the Covid-19 edition as many breastfeeding support groups have simply moved online, but still may have regular days/times. You can still get feeding support from your midwife, health visitor, practising International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) and the National Breastfeeding Helpline, even though there may be some changes to their services.



## **Useful links:**

Face to Face support in the West Midlands:

<https://bit.ly/birminghambreastfeeding>

The Breastfeeding Network (BfN) Helpline 0300 100 0212 (9.30am-9.30pm)

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers (ABM) Helpline: 0300 330 5453  
(9.30am -10.30pm)

The National Childbirth Trust (NCT) Feeding Helpline: 0300 330 0700

Choosing formula: <https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/parents-carers>

Video on feeding through tongue tie when tongue tie services are closed:

<https://www.facebook.com/AssocBfMothers/videos/2516906498561090/>

Breastfeeding information from pregnancy to toddler and beyond:

<https://padlet.com/briannadifs/dudleybabies>

Guide to Bottle feeding: <https://bit.ly/guidetobottlefeeding>

NHS breastfeeding leaflet: <http://bit.ly/startBF>

<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/>

Drugs in breastmilk: <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/detailed-information/drugs-in-breastmilk/>

# My Body

Your body just spent 10 months growing an entirely new human being. Understandably, this means that when that being is out, your body is unlikely to feel the same as it did before you were pregnant. You may find that you love it even more, knowing the incredible things it is capable of, or you may find it difficult to feel positive about the changes you are experiencing. Give yourself time and space to process these things. Every pregnancy, birth and body are different. Be kind to yourself. Accept and ask for help where you can. Rest and acknowledge that you have experienced something life changing.

*“Reusable pads are amazing! Postpartum I spritzed with water with a few drops of lavender oil in and whacked them in the fridge for a few hours before using. They are also fab for post-partum leaks and hold a lot more than disposable.”*

*- Emma*

The range of postpartum experiences is diverse and varied, so there can be lots of different types of "normal". Many women find their bump takes a while to reduce as the muscles move and change. Stretch marks can take time to become less noticeable. You may experience some hair loss or sweating at night.

Post-natal bleeding will happen however you give birth, you can use special disposable or reusable pads, but try not to use tampons for this bleeding to reduce your risk of infection. You may notice the bleeding is redder and heavier during a breastfeed. This happens because breastfeeding makes your womb contract. You may also feel cramps similar to period pains. The bleeding will carry on for a few weeks. It will gradually turn a brownish colour and decrease until it finally stops.

If there is anything that doesn't feel right to you in this time, don't be afraid to call your midwife, health visitor, GP or 111. While services may not be running as usual, your health is a priority and will be regarded as essential by the health service. Seek help if you get a swollen/painful leg and/or difficulty breathing, you are losing large clots in your bleeding, your c-section/episiotomy site is showing signs of infection, you have a severe or persistent headache, or your mood is so low it's difficult to do everyday, necessary things.

At around 6-8 weeks after you've had your baby, you should be offered a postnatal check with a GP and if not, you can request one. This may need to be done over the phone, but it is an essential appointment. You may have a list of things you want to talk about, or questions to ask about your physical or mental health. Some things you may want to consider (we've included a notes box for you to use if you'd like):

- how you're feeling, your mental health and wellbeing
- your postpartum bleeding, discharge or period
- your poo, wee or wind
- healing of c-section incision or episiotomy/tears
- contraception/sex
- support with general health



The following section on your core, pelvic floor and c-section recovery is put together by the incredible Kerry Cox, a pregnancy/postnatal movement and massage specialist from Female Fitness Matters. Her contact details are at the end.

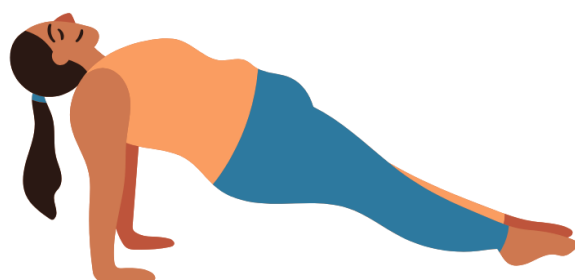
## **Your core and pelvic floor muscles**

Your pelvic floor muscles are something you probably never thought about pre-pregnancy but conversations with your midwife, other moms and the strain of your changing body and childbirth have likely brought them to the fore. And their importance shouldn't be underestimated. They are a sling of muscles that support your pelvic organs (think seatbelt for your bladder, vagina and rectum), they help with bladder, bowel and sexual function, trunk stability and mobility, and they're needed to relax/stretch during childbirth.

Whilst it's common for pregnancy and birth to weaken your pelvic floor muscles and for some women to experience incontinence (urinary and / or faecal - particularly if you had an assisted birth or significant tearing) or prolapse (the bulging of pelvic organs into the vagina), this is not normal and something that is fixable for the vast majority of women. Please do not listen to anyone who tells you 'that's just how it is after having kids' or anyone promoting Tena Lady!

It's also perfectly possible to have too much tone in your pelvic floor muscles after having a baby, so muscles that are too tight and struggle to relax. Some of the signs of a 'hypertonic pelvic floor' include, but are not limited to, pelvic pain (generally or during sex), difficulty emptying your bladder or bowels and constipation.

If you're experiencing any issues, a women's health physiotherapist (either via the NHS or privately if you have private medical insurance or the means to pay) would be a great first port of call to get a proper assessment of what's happening with your muscles and some initial exercises to improve this.





After this, a specialist postnatal trainer like Kerry Cox, of Female Fitness Matters ([www.femalefitnessmatters.co.uk](http://www.femalefitnessmatters.co.uk)), would be well placed to help you develop further strength in your core and pelvic floor and to get back to the sports and activities that you enjoy.

Regardless of whether you have any particular symptoms, your core and pelvic floor muscles will likely need some TLC post baby and a great starting point is your breathing (see link below). This can be especially helpful if you have a separation of your abdominal muscles / "diastasis recti." Weak core muscles commonly lead to back pain, an increased risk of hernia and prolapse and, from an aesthetic perspective, a "pooch" or doming of your stomach muscles that you simply can't get rid of.

<https://femalefitnessmatters.co.uk/2018/11/22/breathing-what-should-happen/>

Kerry's top tips for strengthening your core and pelvic floor muscles are:

- 1) Reconnect to your deep core muscles (it might feel slow and unexciting, but it gets results!)
- 2) Correct any dysfunctional breathing and posture
- 3) Eat well and stay hydrated to aid the healing process that's going on in your body
- 4) Ensure that the movements you make / exercises that you do don't create unnecessary pressure or strain on your core. If they cause pain, leaking or significant bulging or doming of your abs then something needs to change.

*Mobile:* 07970 287043

*Email:* [femalefitnessmatters@gmail.com](mailto:femalefitnessmatters@gmail.com)

*Website:* [www.femalefitnessmatters.co.uk](http://www.femalefitnessmatters.co.uk)

*Facebook:* [www.facebook.com/femalefitnessmatters](http://www.facebook.com/femalefitnessmatters)

*Instagram:* <https://www.instagram.com/femalefitnessmatters/>

## **C-section recovery**

More than one in four births in the UK are by Caesarean section (“C-section”). Whether you actively chose to have a c-section or it was an unintended part of your baby’s arrival, there are lots of positive things you can do to aid your recovery. Helpfully Kerry Cox, of Female Fitness Matters has a useful blog article on the subject, covering everything from getting in and out of bed (a whole new experience post surgery!) to Bridget Jones pants to the importance of massaging your scar.

<https://femalefitnessmatters.co.uk/2019/05/24/c-section-recovery/>

Very few women are ever advised to massage their scars, but the impact of doing so can be significant. When your body is healing, it produces internal scar tissue and these adhesions can sometimes bind to nearby organs and tissues that should move freely, resulting in a pulling or trapped sensation. They can also be a source of digestive/bowel problems, incontinence, lower back pain and sometimes even infertility. Once your scar is fully healed on a superficial level massage can be hugely beneficial in minimising the impact of these adhesions, in returning mobility and sensation to the area and in assisting the body’s natural drainage. And whilst it’s never too late to make improvements to the area around your scar, the earlier the better!

<https://femalefitnessmatters.co.uk/2018/11/22/c-section-scar-massage/>

## **Useful links:**

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/womens-health-after-motherhood>

Tips for recovery: <https://www.blossomyogaandwellbeing.com/blossom-blog.php?page=detail&bbld=56>

<https://femalefitnessmatters.co.uk/>

<https://www.thisgirlcan.co.uk/activities/exercising-with-your-baby/>

Breastfeeding/postpartum friendly fashion: <https://www.cibii.co.uk/>

<https://undefiningmotherhood.com/postpartum-body-image/>

Postpartum poo (!) : <https://www.blossomyogaandwellbeing.com/blossom-blog.php?page=detail&bbld=31>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/your-body-after-childbirth/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/you-after-birth/>

<https://www.nct.org.uk/life-parent/how-you-might-be-feeling/coping-lack-sleep-newborn>



# My Mind

## Wellbeing

Feeling good and like yourself may look a little different when you have a whole other human to take care of. You've probably already had to make a lot of changes to your self-care, social and leisure routines thanks to Covid-19. Some of these changes may turn out to be helpful when you have a new baby, such as evening chats over zoom with friends. You are still important, and your needs matter. There is no greater gift we can give our children than showing them how to live their best lives, leading by example.



*"The first 6 weeks or so socially were ok. Paternity leave then everyone popping in on their day off to visit the new baby. After that it was quite lonely. Novelty wore off for work friends, didn't yet have mummy friends & only a feeding, pooing machine for company who I talked to referring to myself in the 3rd person constantly."*

- Sarah

You may be a social butterfly, and worry about how you will maintain real life connections during postpartum - focusing on how you will find local parent friends and take part in physically distanced socialising may be your priority. You may be part of a team or regular hobby meet up that is able to still keep going (maybe in a different way) - how will they feel about you participating with baby, having a break for a while or rearranging to a time/day/venue that is easier for you? You may love quiet and solitude - do you have people around you who can ensure you still get this?

Would an e-reader be a good solution for a bookworm? How about a meal delivery service for a foodie? A monthly craft box subscription if you're crafty? There are plenty of options available, and planning for it in advance will mean you don't need to reach a low point of missing what you used to have before taking action. It is can become easy to find 10-15 minutes to yourself, and find it disappears in a social media scroll-fest, which may leave you feeling less than recharged. Having easy to plan, low decision activities ready to go - like an easy read, a pick up/put down craft or a luxury shower product can help you make the most of your self-care time.

What do I do now to...

Relax

Have fun

Socialise

Empty rectangular box for notes.

How will this need to change with a baby in tow?

Empty rectangular box for notes.

How can I make local connections in pregnancy? *(e.g. feeding support groups, antenatal sessions, antenatal classes)*

Empty rectangular box for notes.



## **Mental Health**

In addition to any mental health challenges you may be facing as a result of coronavirus, around 1 in 5 women will experience a mental health problem during pregnancy or in the year after giving birth. It might be new, something you've experienced before or you may continue to experience mental health problems that existed before you were pregnant.

It can be really difficult to feel able to talk openly about how you're feeling when you become a new parent. You might feel:

- pressure to be happy and excited
- like you have to be on top of everything
- worried you're a bad parent if you're struggling with your mental health
- worried that your baby will be taken away from you if you admit how you're feeling

But it's important to ask for help or support if you need it. You're likely to find that many new mothers are feeling the same way.

If you experience thoughts about death or harming yourself or the baby, this can be very frightening, and may make you feel as if you are going mad or completely out of control. You may be afraid to tell anyone about these feelings. But it's important to realise that having these thoughts doesn't mean that you are actually going to harm yourself or your children. However difficult it is, the more you can bring these feelings out into the open and talk about them, whether to a family member, a friend or a health professional, the sooner you can get support. If you need urgent help, call 999 - not all medical emergencies are physical.

If you already have an existing mental health condition, do try to talk to the midwives, doctors, health visitors or any other health professionals looking after you. If it is managed by medication, you may want to look to the Drugs in Breastmilk service to see how this can continue once baby is born.

Once baby is here, you will be supported by midwives, and then your health visitor, and your 6-8 week check with a GP. They will ask you about how you are feeling, be as honest as possible. They are there for YOU. Many areas also have a specialist team for perinatal mental health, alongside community mental health support.

### My Local Contacts

The following three organisations are a good place to start.

Mind:

Home-Start:

PANDAS foundation:

Peer support groups (search for mental health peer support \*your area\*):

- I know the warning signs of common perinatal mental health issues
- My partner/family know the warning signs of common perinatal mental health issues



Filling in this planner is a fantastic act of self care. Building your support network by knowing how to find other local parents, groups and activities can help to stop you feeling isolated or lonely. Knowing what support you might need with daily tasks and not being afraid to ask for help can reduce the feeling of being overwhelmed. Taking the pressure off yourself and being prepared to go slowly is a gift you deserve. The next sections will help you get organised and plan out some practical ways to practise self-care and leisure time with a baby in tow.





Useful links:

Mind information on perinatal mental health: <https://bit.ly/2NLEwq3>

PANDAS Foundation: Helpline 0808 1961 776 9am-8pm  
<http://www.pandasfoundation.org.uk/>

The Association for Postnatal Illness: Phoneline 0207 386 0868 10am-2pm  
<https://apni.org/>

Confidential information and advice for parents: <https://www.familylives.org.uk/>

Mental health during Covid-19: <https://maternalmentalhealthalliance.org/news/mmha-members-offer-reassurance-amid-coronavirus-outbreak/>

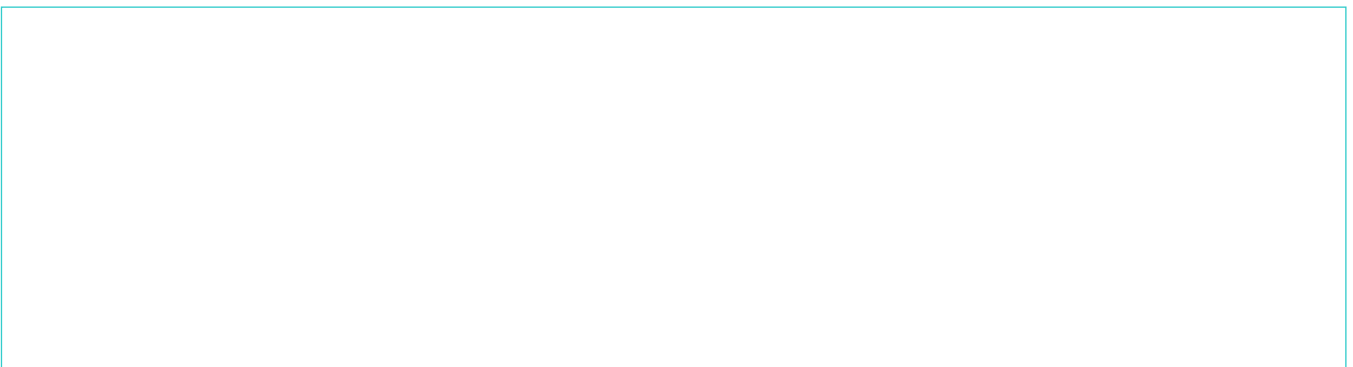
For parents with crying and sleepless babies: <https://www.cry-sis.org.uk/>

Support with birth trauma: <https://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk/>

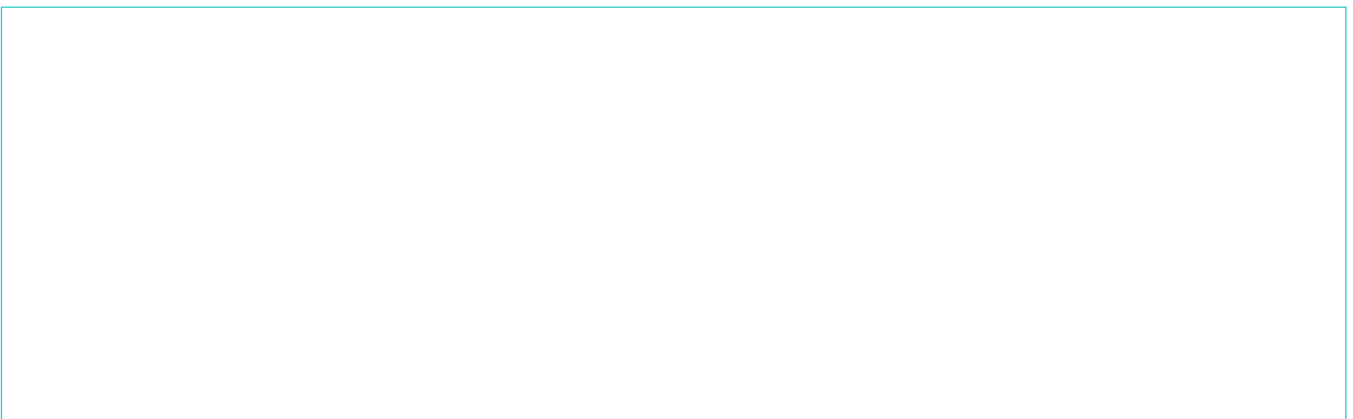
# My Supporter

Your supporters may not grow and birth the baby, but that doesn't mean they don't experience it with you. Partners are often strongly affected by witnessing birth, sleep deprivation, money worries, changing relationship dynamics, new responsibilities or just the enormity of bringing new life into the world. Covid-19 may bring additional pressures on supporters from work, caring needs of other family members, financial challenges or mental health worries. Postnatal depression in fathers and partners is common and underdiagnosed. If your partner has experienced mental health issues in the past, they may change or become more noticeable after your baby is born. Knowing and understanding this before baby arrives means you are in a stronger position to notice and take steps to access support.

Your supporter may want to use the space below to explore with you some of the things about the postpartum period they are excited about (holding baby, introducing them to their friends, sharing their favourite music etc.)



And then they may want to use this space to share some of the things they are worried or anxious about, and some of the things that may trigger negative feelings.



My supporters and I know the warning signs of common perinatal mental health issues for partners



We know where to get support if we need it



Life for all of you is likely to change quite dramatically, so being as kind and gentle with each other as you can be (even when very sleep deprived) will make such a difference. If your partner is able to, they can play a huge role in caring for you and your baby. They can support with nappy changing, winding, holding while they nap, taking them out for walks in the fresh air, reading/singing together, bath time and snuggling/swaying together whenever you need/want some time. This support can be given too by your parents, parents in law, siblings, friends or other family, staying safely within any current physical distancing guidelines (care for vulnerable people is essential and allowed).

When/if your supporter returns to work, you may find it useful for them to prepare and leave lunch for you, especially in the early days. Knowing when they will be home, and when/how you can check in during the day means you can plan time where you know you have someone you love to talk to.



Sometimes, when you are full of emotion, it can be hard to say what you really need. Take some time to think about and share with your supporter the things that work for you and make sure they know the things that definitely don't help (saying 'calm down'?)! You could try talking about this and filling in the sections together. Your supporter could let you know things that help them too.

When I am feeling OVERWHELMED, I need:

When I am feeling SAD, I need:

When I am feeling ANXIOUS, I need:

When I am feeling \_\_\_\_\_, I need:

This isn't helpful:

Useful links:

<https://birthing4blokes.com/>

<http://maternalmentalhealthalliance.org//wp-content/uploads/Postpartum-Psychosis-a-Guide-for-Partners.pdf>

Postnatal Depression Survival Guide for Dads: [https://www.acacia.org.uk/files/cms/173\\_acacia\\_dads-postnatal\\_brochure\\_FINAL-WEB.pdf](https://www.acacia.org.uk/files/cms/173_acacia_dads-postnatal_brochure_FINAL-WEB.pdf)

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/dad-to-be-pregnant-partner/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/postnatal-depression-and-perinatal-mental-health/partners/>

<https://www.laleche.org.uk/supporting-a-breastfeeding-mother/>

<https://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk/for-parents/fathers-partners-page>

# My Home

One of the most heard tips we receive from families is to batch cook and fill the freezer with easily reheated lunches and dinners for you and your family. It may be like the last thing you feel like doing in the final weeks of pregnancy, but we promise your future self will thank you! You may even have friends who ask you what they can do to help - bringing the next meal is a great trade off for a new baby visit!

4 meals I am going to try and freeze:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



*"Some days I couldn't move from the sofa due to cluster feeding so nothing got done. Felt bad at the time but now realise that it just isn't that important to do the washing or mop the floor"*

*- Leonie*

4 easy breakfasts/lunches I can make and eat one-handed:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Grocery delivery slots may be harder to get, and so it may be worth planning in advance for any friends, family or local volunteers to shop and drop for you.

You have probably already thought about where your baby will sleep, but have you thought about where you will change, feed and play with them? Some women who have had c-sections find moving around while carrying baby tricky during their recovery, and have had great success with making "nests" in different areas of the house with things they may need. It's ok if baby needs feeding to take a few moments to get yourself a glass/bottle of water, a snack and your phone/book/TV remote. Then you are ready for a feed to turn into a very long nap!

When it comes to household chores, you may not be able to keep up with how things were before, and there will be some new additions when it comes to the baby. Take the time to sit down with anyone you share your house with (including older children) and set some basic expectations. It's OK for these to change after baby is here, and for expectations to evolve as your baby becomes more mobile, you get slightly more sleep or you return to work. Some people find that chore rotas, a family schedule or just a list helps make sure that old favourite "how can I help?" is trotted out less often. If you share your house with someone else, the responsibility to keep clean clothes in the drawers, fresh food in the fridge and layers of dirt off everything you see is NOT yours alone.

Name:

Chores:

Name:

Chores:

Name:

Chores:

Name:

Chores:

Useful links:

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/freeze-ahead-recipes-parents-be>

<https://www.theorganisedmum.blog/>

<https://www.fairplaylife.com/covid-19-toolkit>

# My Work/Finances

Stuff! There is so much of it around aimed at babies, parents and families. While you may not be able to browse the shops to make purchases, everything is still available to order online if you need to, and even things like the Baby Show are offering their events (with discounts!) on virtual platforms. You may be more reluctant to spend money on items before baby is here and you know they need them, so focus on clothes, safe transport, a safe place to sleep and any feeding equipment you may need. Cot mattresses, car seats and open system breast pumps should always be bought new and not second-hand. You may be eligible for healthy start vouchers which you can use on milk, fresh or frozen fruit/veg, infant formula as well as free vitamins for you and baby.



It's worth discussing with your partner/other members of your family NOW how you will organise finances. You may currently split things exactly down the middle, have a shared bank account or keep things very separate. However you currently work it, it is inevitable that adjustments to financial circumstances will be needed in order to look after your new arrival.



*"You don't need as much as you think, and you don't need it that early. Whilst it's nice to have a nursery set up and ready, baby should sleep in the same room as you for the first 6 months (including naps!), and the safest place if you are physically able to change baby is on the floor, so you don't need a fancy change table if you don't have budget/room/desire."*

*Snot suckers and electric bath thermometers and electric swinging chairs and all these other gadgets all have their place but don't feel you have to buy everything. Your baby needs you and time and love, not the latest toy or gadget. Feel free if you want to but don't feel you have to."*

*- Emma*



If you have been impacted by coronavirus, even if you don't currently need to access any additional support it may be worth finding out what could be available to you if you did happen to need it - and understand any complexities before the newborn fog sets in!



Make sure you know the requirements for returning to work, in case you want to go back earlier or later than planned. Start looking into childcare now so you know what's around, how early you need to book in and what the financial consequences for your family will be. Be honest and open with your employer if Covid-19 is going to impact your ability to find childcare or return to work, you will not be the only one. It's OK to have an idea of what things will be like when you're pregnant, and for that to change once your baby is here.

While on maternity leave, you may find yourself being approached with plenty of opportunities to make money running your own business. These often sound great, with flexible hours, bringing your children with you and making money around your other commitments. Make sure you always research carefully into any job or business opportunity you are offered, however great it sounds.

You can use the table below to work out rough estimates and plan a budget for your maternity period. Sit down together with the other adults in your household if you haven't already to understand your situation and any changes you may need to make.

| <u>Income (salary, maternity pay, child benefit)</u> | <u>Outgoings (bills, repayments, leisure, food)</u> |
|--|---|
|  |   |

Making a list is a great way to ensure you don't double up on purchases or buy things you don't need. You can also keep track of offers/price drops on things you really want to buy. Remember lots of "baby essentials" lists are written by companies who want you to buy a lot of stuff! Online wishlists are a useful way to show loving friends/family what you really need for your baby, and you may even find that they already have what you need and don't have to buy new - a great money saver and good for the environment!

#### Useful links:

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2020/03/uk-coronavirus-help-and-your-rights/>

<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>

<https://www.aims.org.uk/information/item/maternity-rights>

<https://maternityaction.org.uk/covidmaternityfaqs/>

<https://pregnantthenscrewed.com/>

<https://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/sorting-out-your-money-when-youre-pregnant>

<https://www.gov.uk/child-benefit>

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/families>

<https://www.talentedladiesclub.com/articles/thinking-of-joining-a-mlm-read-the-truth-behind-the-income-opportunity/>

# Out and About

If you have had a c-section and rely mainly on driving to get around, you may need to make some adjustments for the first 6 weeks or more as you recover. If public transport has been advised against and you are unable to use a private car, do you have friends who could offer lifts to you if needed for attending medical appointments?

You may have already bought a pushchair, or are thinking about it now. Some things to check: does it fit in the boot of your car? Can you lift it, unfold it, and manoeuvre it on your own (while recovering from birth, which as you've already seen can be quite intense!)? Do you have place to store it in your house/flat? You may be spending more time outside in nature for daily exercise, what kind of pushchair matches what you do?



Leaving the house for the first time can be a bit daunting, even if it is just for a walk around the block. You may also be considering journeys to meet for physically distanced walks or picnics, or longer walks for daily exercise.

You can use the space below to think about the kinds of things you might want to pack in your bag before leaving the house. We've started the list for you:

You: phone, purse, keys, water bottle, travel mug

Baby: nappies, wipes, change of clothes, muslin, feeding equipment



Using a sling or carrier is a great way to transport your baby hands free while still keeping them close, and can be used from birth. If you have specific circumstances like a premature baby, a disability, birth injury or anything else, you can get online support from a whole host of trained carrying consultants.

Most areas even have a lending library (like a book library but for slings/carriers) where you can borrow a carrier, try them on and practise using them, and like feeding groups you can go before your baby is even here. Many have adapted to Covid-19 by moving the majority of their services online or via post, including hire, fitting and consultations.



Slings and carriers have the added benefits of:

For your baby:

- encourages bonding
- helps to regulate temperature, heart rate, breathing and emotional/physical growth
- helps facilitate a breastfeeding relationship
- supports sleep
- reduces crying
- motion from being walked can soothe colic
- upright positioning can help with symptoms of reflux
- can help them poo!
- helps develop balance, neuromotor development and muscle strength
- encourage speech and language
- gives space for baby to retreat from the world when overwhelmed/stimulated
- reduces risk of flat head syndrome

For you:

- encourages bonding and release of oxytocin
- increases confidence
- more in tune with baby's needs
- can help with PND
- increases family connections - other people can use the sling too!
- hands free time without listening to a fussy baby
- physically and mentally stimulating
- easier to get around and access more places

# Notes

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