

Preparations for Post Partum

By Penny Simkin, PT

Before the baby is born, you should do some After Birth Planning. Here is a checklist of suggestions.

- [] 1. Choose a doctor, clinic, or nurse practitioner to provide health care for your baby. Interview people before the baby is born and choose one who is well-qualified, who is warm and caring, whose office is close to your home, and who meets the requirements of your insurance company, if applicable. (See "Choosing Health Care for Your baby" Handout or page 26 in *The Birth Partner*).
- [] 2. Pack your bag for the hospital (items for labor, postpartum, and for the baby's trip home, or gather supplies for a home birth). (See page 151 in *Pregnancy Childbirth and the Newborn* or pages 10-12 in *The Birth Partner*)
- [] 3. Acquire (beg, borrow, or buy) the necessary clothing, supplies and equipment for the baby. (See page 24 in *The Birth Partner*)
- [] 4. Buy diapers or sign up with a diaper service.
- [] 5. Arrange a convenient baby care area and a sleeping area:
 - Dressing and diaper changing area (a padded surface to lay the baby on): Have clothing, diapers, waterproof pants, moistened wipes, pins, diaper rash ointment, and a diaper pail within arm's reach.
 - Sleeping arrangement: a basket, baby carriage, crib or cradle where the baby can be safely placed for sleeping.
- [] 6. Make sure all the baby's borrowed clothes are clean. New clothes are sometimes softer and more comfortable after they have been washed.
- [] 7. Buy or borrow a book on infant care and one on breastfeeding.
(Recommended: *Your Baby and Child from Birth to Age 5*, by Penelope Leach and *The Nursing Mother's Companion*, by Kathleen Huggins)
- [] 8. Get breastfeeding supplies; 2 or more nursing bras, breast pads, black tea bags. Find out where you can obtain other supplies if needed: breastshields; lanolin, bag balm, or vitamin E oil for sore nipples; a breast pump. Get the names and phone numbers of local breastfeeding experts who can advise you. (Recommended: The Breastfeeding Center 206.327.2327.
- [] 9. Clean your house. It may be the last chance you have for quite awhile. If you have been accumulating piles of papers, magazines, and clothing, get rid of what you don't need. The baby and accompanying items take up a lot of space.

- [] 10. Plan two weeks' worth of meals and make up two related grocery lists: 1) Non-perishable items needed for those meals; and 2) Perishable items for each meal. Shop for list number 1 before the baby is born and have list number 2 ready to consult when the time comes. Make sure the meals you plan are very easy to prepare.
- [] 11. Prepare some dishes in advance and freeze them. The capacity of your freezer will limit how many dishes you can make.
- [] 12. Line up postpartum help: your mother, mother-in-law, relatives, friends, or hired help. If planning to hire someone, find out about businesses and individuals that specialized in postpartum help. Find out their rates, their training, the usual duties preformed, and whether they are bonded. If friends or loved ones will come to help, recognize that this is different from most visits or vacations. This is a working visit for them and you are not supposed to be the perfect hostess. The main purpose of having help is to enable you to accomplish your priorities: establishing successful feeding and care of your baby; providing opportunities for your to rest and eat adequately; allowing opportunities for your partner to get to know the baby and catch up on rest; giving you time together as a family; and to visit with the kind loved ones who are offering you their help.
- [] 13. If you have a short maternity leave (less than 3 months) begin investigating options for day care: family members; informal arrangements with friends or individuals who provide one-on-one care; institutional day cares; nannies or *au pairs*. Find out about costs, safety arrangements, ratio of adults to children, and availability of a day care when you need it.
- [] 14. Make a list of important phone numbers and post it near the phone.

The baby's doctor _____	Diaper service _____
You doctor/midwife _____	Other _____
Hospital/Birth center _____	_____
Hospital emergency _____	_____
Emergency aid service _____	_____
Your childbirth educator _____	_____