

This guide will help you prepare for the fourth trimester — the first 12 weeks after delivery. Now is the time to build a support network of family, friends and community resources, which may include postpartum doulas and child care. Sharp is here for you with live, virtual and on-demand classes and support groups. Learn more at sharp.com/postpartum.

1. Sleep in the First 6 Weeks

New parents may need extra help getting sleep. Support during the night, naps during the day, and tag-team parenting can all be effective tools.

People available for **sleep support**:

Strategies to help **get enough sleep**:

Make napping a priority

Take shifts sleeping and caring for baby

To learn techniques that will help you set a sleep routine for your baby, join our **Baby Sleep Strategies class** at sharp.com/babysleep.

2. Nutrition and Hydration

Maintaining a balanced diet with a newborn can be hard. Decrease stress for yourself in the fourth trimester by freezing meals before your baby arrives, finding grocery stores that deliver, and knowing takeout options.

Meals to prepare and freeze before baby arrives:

People who can **prepare/deliver** meals after baby arrives (a meal organization website, such as mealtrain.com, can help with scheduling):

3. Renewing and Recharging: Maintaining a Sense of “Self” and “Us”

While time spent together as a family is priceless, parents also need time for their own interests and to nurture their relationship as a couple. Learn more about how to prepare your relationships with others and yourself throughout the fourth trimester by watching our free on-demand video series at sharp.com/postpartum.

Activities and breathers for the **birthing parent's** rest, renewal and reenergizing:

Activities and breathers for the **partner's** rest, renewal and reenergizing:

Activities and breathers for **connecting as a couple**:

People who can **help provide alone time**:

When exhausted, you and your partner may feel irritable and struggle with concentration, making communication hard. Express how you feel with phrases like, “I need to tap out,” and “My volcano is about to erupt.” Or use a scale of 1 to 5. Respond with emotional support and avoid problem-solving immediately. Regularly check in with each other to gauge stress levels and foster understanding.

Ways we can support each other and **avoid conflict** when exhausted:

4. Infant Feeding and Support

Whether you feed by breast, bottle or both, each method takes some adjustment time. Some parents choose one feeding method while others prefer a combination. **Each baby and family is unique; choose what works best for you and your baby and reevaluate as necessary.**

Learn more about feeding your newborn in the first month with our free, on-demand Feeding Your Baby, Your Way webinar at sharp.com/feedingyourbaby.

Local **breastfeeding resources** for support and information:

Sharp's free breastfeeding support groups at sharp.com/breastfeeding

Postpartum doulas/lactation consultants who can help with infant feeding:

Lactation educators at the New Beginnings Boutique at Sharp Mary Birch provide free breastfeeding support 7 days a week (sharp.com/newbeginningsboutique)

5. Finding Friends Who Are Also Parents

Adding someone to your support system who can relate to you can help you cope with challenges.

The following **friends, neighbors and co-workers** are parents:

Strategies for building a **support network** of friends who are parents:

6. Mental Health Is Very Important

Anxiety and depression are the most common complications of childbirth and pregnancy. These illnesses — known as perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs) — affect 1 in 5 women during pregnancy or within the first year after giving birth. Fortunately, PMADs are temporary and respond well to treatment, which may include self-care, social support, talk therapy and medication. Find Sharp's postpartum mental health resources at sharp.com/postpartum.

Local **support groups** or **medical professionals** to get help from:

Sharp's free postpartum support group at sharp.com/postpartum

Sharp's Maternal Mental Health Program at sharp.com/maternalmentalhealth

To take care of your baby effectively, make self-care a necessity rather than a luxury. Take a break from social media and electronic devices, and make resting a priority. It's important to share difficult emotions with someone other than your partner. Find opportunities to laugh and have fun. Consider attending classes and joining parent groups to learn new parenting skills and grow your support network.

Ways **birthing partner** copes with stress and fatigue:

Ways **partner** copes with stress and fatigue:

Other resources:

- Postpartum Health Alliance — postpartumhealthalliance.org
- Postpartum Support International — postpartum.net
- Postpartum Men — postpartummen.com

7. Managing Visitors

Visitors may add stress while you're adjusting to a new schedule and your newborn's needs. Be sure you and your partner are on the same page about visitors.

Ask yourselves:

Do we prefer if people **call ahead or just show up**?

Do we want to use a **code word** if we want a visitor to leave?

Will we have visitors be up to date on **vaccinations** (flu, Tdap, etc.), wear masks and wash their hands before holding our baby?

If a visitor offers to do **tasks for us**, what would we feel comfortable with them doing?

Our **visitor policy** will be:

8. Adjusting to Your “New Normal”

Parenthood is full of surprises. Flexibility can help reduce stress and anxiety during this transition. Plan for challenges and be willing to adapt as needed. Discuss what your roles, responsibilities and expectations will be with your partner. And get help as needed by speaking with friends, family members and people in support groups.

The **birthing parent’s concerns** about this transition:

The **partner’s concerns** about this transition:

Our plan for **housekeeping and chores**:

Our plan for caring for **siblings and pets**:

Our **options for child care, babysitters or day care**:

Our plan for **returning to work**:

9. Important Information to Gather**Primary Care Doctor**

Name _____

Medical group _____

Phone number _____

Insurance Information

Policyholder name _____

Plan name _____

Member ID _____

Group ID _____

HMO / PPO (circle one)

Pediatrician

Name _____

Phone number _____

Address _____

OBGYN

Name _____

Phone number _____

Address _____

Same-Day Care Options

For virtual and in-person same-day care, including urgent care and emergency room locations, use the Sharp app or visit sharp.com/getcare. The Rady Children's Hospital ER is located at 3020 Children's Way, San Diego, CA 92123.