



## **Subject: Information for the Postpartum Period**

Soon, you will give birth. The first 10 days after childbirth are known as the postpartum period. During this time, we (the midwives) and your maternity nurse will be your primary contacts for the care of both mother and baby. However, the postpartum recovery period lasts much longer, as your body needs time to heal from pregnancy and childbirth.

Your maternity nurse will perform initial check-ups on both mother and baby during the first week, provide support with feeding, and ensure a calm and structured environment in your household. You will receive information on baby care so that, by the end of this period, you feel confident in taking care of your baby independently.

The midwife holds medical responsibility during this period. We will visit you at home 2 or 3 times to check how things are going. We will visit on the agreed-upon days between 09:00 and 18:00, making our best effort to come in the morning.

The CJG (Center for Youth and Family, also known as the consultatiebureau) will visit to perform the newborn hearing test and the heel prick test. More information can be found at [www.pns.nl](http://www.pns.nl).

For emergencies, we are available 24/7 at: 06-53743806

## **When should you call us?**

For the mother:

- Excessive blood loss or passing large blood clots
- Inability to urinate properly within 6 hours after childbirth or feeling like urine remains in the bladder
- Fever (rectal temperature  $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$ )
- Sudden symptoms such as headache, seeing stars, vomiting, upper abdominal pain, or pain between the shoulder blades
- A swollen, red, or painful leg
- Extreme sleep deprivation leading to irritability, anger, or restlessness

For the baby:

- Yellowing of the skin or eyes (in bright light) – first consult with your maternity nurse
- Poor feeding (occasional refusal is not a concern)

- Rectal temperature  $<36.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  or  $>37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  – check again after adjusting clothing and remeasure after an hour. If still abnormal, contact us.
- Forceful vomiting after every feeding
- Blue discoloration of the skin or lips
- If the baby has lost more than 7% of its birth weight, the maternity nurse will contact us.

Feeding advice: Try to feed your baby at least every 3 hours. If breastfeeding, follow your baby's hunger cues. Because we believe that good support for breastfeeding is important, you can visit Astrid, our lactation consultant, (almost) every Friday or schedule a telephone consultation. This care is free for you, please visit:

<https://verloskundigcentrumbergweg.nl/en/maternity-period>

If supplementing with formula, consult your maternity nurse about the appropriate amount.

### **After the first week**

One week after birth, we conclude our postpartum care. Until the 10th day, you can still reach us for any concerns about your baby. After that, your general practitioner becomes the main point of contact. The CJG will send you a letter with an appointment for an intake interview (this happens automatically after birth registration). The consultation office will monitor your baby's growth, development, and vaccinations.

When your baby is exactly 1 week old, start giving vitamin D (until age 4). If you are breastfeeding, also start vitamin K (until 3 months). Dosage instructions are on the packaging, and your maternity nurse will assist with the first dose.

For up to 6 weeks postpartum, you can contact us with questions regarding wound healing, blood loss, or breastfeeding. At the end of this period, you may schedule a postpartum check-up to evaluate the birth and postpartum experience. Contact our assistant to make an appointment. If you delivered under gynecological care, your postpartum check-up will typically be scheduled at the hospital, and you will receive a letter with the appointment details.

### **Postpartum Recovery**

- Blood loss: It is normal to experience bleeding for up to 6 weeks after childbirth, gradually decreasing over time. Activity (such as walking) may temporarily increase bleeding. If bleeding persists beyond 6 weeks or suddenly becomes heavy, contact us.
- Healing of stitches: If you had a vaginal tear or an episiotomy, stitches will dissolve on their own. Occasionally, the midwife will remove them at the end of the postpartum period. Healing usually progresses well, though the scar may remain sensitive for weeks. Over time, the tissue will soften and become less tender.
- Sex: Wait until bleeding has stopped (approximately 4-6 weeks). Initial intercourse may feel sensitive but should not be painful. If pain persists for months, consult your doctor. Breastfeeding may cause vaginal dryness; use lubricants if needed.
- Contraception: Discuss birth control options with us or your GP. Our assistant can schedule a contraception consultation. Fertility can return quickly after childbirth, and

not all birth control methods are compatible with breastfeeding. If you want an IUD, we can also place it. More information: [www.anticonceptie.nl](http://www.anticonceptie.nl).

- Abdominal muscles: Pregnancy causes diastasis (a separation of abdominal muscles). You may feel a gap of 2-2.5 cm when tensing your stomach muscles. It typically takes 6-12 weeks for the muscles to close. Avoid training straight abdominal muscles until this period has passed; instead, focus on obliques and lower abdominal muscles.
- Pelvic floor: For proper recovery, practice pelvic floor exercises for several months postpartum. If you experience heaviness in the lower abdomen or vagina after prolonged standing/walking, incontinence, or difficulty controlling gas, consult a pelvic physiotherapist.
- Exercise: Gradually resume physical activity. Start with gentle walking based on your comfort level. Avoid sports and heavy lifting for the first 6 weeks to protect pelvic floor recovery. Several gyms offer postpartum exercise classes.

### **Adjusting to Parenthood**

Having a baby brings many changes. To prepare for the first period after the birth, you can talk to your partner about your expectations of each other. Tell each other what you expect from each other and what you need help with. For example, include how you deal with lack of sleep. Or how you want to deal with maternity visits. Do you want more guidance on this? Please look at pages 4 and 5 of this document for the maternity plan of Verloskundig Centrum Bergweg.

For more information about postpartum recovery, visit [www.deverloskundige.nl](http://www.deverloskundige.nl) or ask your midwife during check-ups.

We wish you a wonderful postpartum period!

### **Midwifery Practice Bergweg**

#### **Contact Numbers:**

Emergency Line: 06-53743806

Call this number during the postpartum period for urgent concerns. We provide postpartum care for the baby until 10 days old and for the mother up to 6 weeks postpartum.

Practice Number: 010-4666026

For scheduling or rescheduling appointments, minor questions, and call-back requests. You can also email us (responses within 48 hours).

Center for Youth and Family (CJG): 010-2010110

For organizational inquiries, feeding and development questions, parenting support, and vaccination information.

General Practitioner's Emergency Line (HAP): 010-4669573

For urgent medical concerns about the baby (after 10 days old) or the mother (after 6 weeks postpartum) outside of office hours. During office hours, always contact your GP directly.

## **Maternity plan - tips to prepare for the first weeks after giving birth**

Because in the first weeks after the birth you will be faced with a lot of impressions and demands, it is a good idea to take a look at the new role you and your partner will have prior to the birth. To help you, here is a sample maternity plan. Each section includes questions you can discuss with your partner. In this way we hope to contribute to an enjoyable maternity period for you and your partner.

### 1: Maternity Expectations

- What will the maternity period be like?
- What am I looking forward to?
- What am I dreading?
- What do I expect of myself as a mother/father?
- What do I expect from my partner?
- What do I expect from those around me?
- How do I deal with the broken nights, fatigue and possible physical limitations of myself/my partner? How can we support each other in this?

### 2: Changes in the relationship

- What are my strengths?
- What are my weaknesses?
- What are my partner's strengths?
- What are my partner's weaknesses?
- How do we communicate with each other when we are tired or have disagreements?
- What do we enjoy doing together and should not be missing in our relationship (even when there is a child)?

### 3: Expectations toward maternity care

- What do I expect from the maternity care provider?
- What do I not want her to do (for example, in housework or personal care)?
- What kind of support do I need from the maternity care provider?

### 4: Feeding expectations (if you want to breastfeed)

- What do I expect from breastfeeding?
- How important do I think it is for the baby to be breastfed?
- How much time do I think I will spend breastfeeding? Baby will drink at the breast every 2-3 hours in the beginning, including at night.
- What support do I expect from my partner/my environment?
- Who can I approach with questions about breastfeeding?

### 5: Self-care

- What gives me energy?
- What would I like to do for myself at least once every day/week/month?
- What are my favorite foods? What snacks do I like?
- Who can we ask to cook for us in the maternity period when needed?
- How do I ensure enough rest to recover from pregnancy and childbirth?

#### 6: Visit

- Which people do I expect/want to receive visits from? Think of family and friends but also colleagues.
- Who do I want to see shortly after delivery? Who may come later in the first week? And who later in the maternity period?
- How do I make sure people come at a time that is convenient for me, even though it may not fit as well into their schedule?
- How do I make sure the visits don't take too long?
- What do I expect of myself during the visit (dressed on the couch or in pajamas in bed)?

#### 7: Safety net

- Which people are important to me and my partner?
- Who can we fall back on when it comes to housekeeping/cooking, questions and concerns about parenting, development, etc.?

#### 8: Return to work

- How do I envision returning after my leave? Straight back to full days or fewer hours at first?
- How many hours per week do I want to work after my leave?
- What work will I pick up again?
- What do I need to pick up my work again?
- If breastfeeding: is there a pump room available?

Do you have questions about this maternity plan or any other topic in preparation for the arrival of your child? Feel free to let us know!