

The early days following childbirth are formative for the new mother, baby, and family. Certain fundamental needs and basic services are required for adjustment during the postpartum period, regardless of whether the birth venue has been the hospital, a birth centre, or home.

## The Newborn Care Plan



Your birth plan should also include a newborn birth plan. Many mothers wish to hold their baby skin to skin immediately after birth. Skin to skin contact provides warmth for the baby and satisfaction to the mother.

Some parents want their baby to have a relaxing float in a Leboyer bath soon after birth. The baby might be placed in a heated unit in the nursery if the mother prefers or if the baby is chilled.

What about feeding your baby? Do you prefer to breastfeed or bottle feed? Do you want to provide all the feedings for your baby [which would mean that the baby should receive no water or glucose water from a bottle]? Do you want to feed on demand [that is, whenever and for as long as the baby seems to want to nurse]? Many nurseries restrict demand feedings unless the mother states that demand feeding is her preference.

How much contact do you want for your baby? Some

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hospitals provide a private postpartum room, and even allow the father to rent a cot and stay all night. Other options are to have the baby with you during the day only, or for feedings only. The less time you spend with your baby, the less well you will know her personality and how to care for her.

## BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

Temperature regulation is a critical part of the baby's transition to life outside the uterus. At birth, the infant is wet and the room temperature is lower than the intrauterine environmental temperature. Heat loss occurs rapidly through evaporation, radiation, convection, and conduction, with the body temperature decreasing at a rate of 0.2° to 1°C per minute.

[Baby Gifts and Gift Baskets](#) provides timely and practical information for new moms, as well as gift ideas for pregnancy, baby showers, and to celebrate birth:

### New Baby Gift Ideas

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It should be remembered, however, that the amount of time you will spend with your baby is dependant on several factors. The most important of these are the health of the mother and the health of the baby. For example, it may be medically necessary for a premature infant to be placed in the hospital nursery where her condition can be carefully and continually monitored.

What about circumcision of your baby boy? This surgical procedure involves removing the foreskin of the penis. Since the procedure is optional, it deserves your consideration.

### Precious Baby Moses Basket



We've taken a large Moses baby carrier (20" long x 10" deep) and filled it with some beautiful baby keepsakes and newborn essentials. Mom & Dad will love getting this gorgeous basket full of useful items. Gift includes a Baby's First Handprint kit, 5"x7" Baby Picture Frame, a pastel-colored Plush Hippo, two Receiving Blankets, two pairs of Baby Booties, two 100% Cotton Baby T-shirts, Baby Teether Keys, 4 piece Terry Washcloth Set, a Johnson & Johnson Baby Soap and 9 oz Baby Lotion, and a reusable acrylic box filled with Baby Q-Tips.

**Price: \$ 65.00**

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When will you and your baby leave the hospital? You can stay a few hours to a few days after the birth. An early discharge or short stay means that you leave within six to twenty-four hours after the birth. One obvious advantage is the financial savings involved. Hospitalization costs are calculated by the day or fraction of the day; obviously, the longer you stay in the hospital, the more it costs. Find out how the billing is done so you won't inadvertently stay longer than you can afford. Other considerations besides costs, however, are your need for rest, your need for medical care, and your desire for teaching and medical supervision for the first couple of days. Find out if your hospital sends a nurse to visit all women who have had a short stay, or if they at least make a phone call to check on them. Is instruction available for those wishing a short stay, so that you know what observations to make to make sure everything is going well for the both of you? Another factor in your decision is whether you will have help at home. Sometimes the father can take time off from work or a relative or friend can come in and help extensively; sometimes parents hire helpers to come in daily for a week or two after the birth. In the absence of any help, you might prefer to spend a couple of days in the hospital before going home to

all that responsibility.

If your baby is premature or ill and needs extensive medical care, she will either stay in the nursery or be transferred to a different hospital with more sophisticated facilities for newborns. Time with the baby and breastfeeding may be postponed until she recovers or becomes strong enough to suckle. State in your birth plan that you want to feed the baby yourself and if you want to spend as much time as possible with your baby.

### Unexpected Loss of a Baby

One of the greatest difficulties we face is the possibility that the baby may not live. Every prospective parent worries at times about losing a child. Although it is uncommon, some babies die. This very sad ending to the pregnancy leaves the parents stunned, grieving, depressed, and angry. After losing a child parents are in no state to make important decisions. If you have thought through how you would want a newborn death handled, then, should a death occur, such decisions will have already been made by you at a time you were calm.

Many counselors recommend that couples have private time together with their baby who died. Seeing and holding the child gives the parents a chance to say goodbye to the baby. In addition, pictures, footprints of the baby, and perhaps a lock of hair are mementos that mean a great deal later.

Having a memorial service or funeral for the baby allows friends and relatives to also acknowledge the baby's life and death. Formal ceremonies can often give people a vehicle through which to express their grief and their support for the bereaved parents.

The question of an autopsy often comes up, if the cause of death is unclear, sometimes an autopsy is beneficial, both in answering questions and in preventing the same thing from happening in the future. It would be worthwhile to think through in advance whether you would consent to an autopsy in such a case.