



YOUR FIRST WEEK HOME

*The Postpartum Recovery &
Newborn Care Guide by
Let Mommy Sleep*

Your First Week Home with Baby:

Let Mommy's Sleep's Postpartum Recovery & Newborn Care Guide

Welcome to Parenthood!

The first week home with your baby is a beautiful, life-changing experience, but it also means the beginning of many questions, adjustments, and sleepless nights. We know how overwhelming those early days can feel, and that's why we created Your First Week Home with Baby.

Over the last 15 years at Let Mommy Sleep, we've supported thousands of new parents with evidence-based newborn care and postpartum recovery support, and we want to do the same for you. We'll walk through the essentials of your baby's first week and your own postpartum healing so you feel informed, prepared and supported every step of the way.

Here's what you can expect in this guide:

- Postpartum Healing - What to expect and how to support your recovery.
- Newborn Sleep - What's normal and how to maximize your rest.
- Feeding Basics - Breastfeeding, formula and what no one tells you.
- Baby Care - Diapering, bathing and soothing techniques.
- Postpartum Support - Why you don't have to do this alone.

A Few Things to Keep in Mind:

There are a lot of right ways to parent. Every baby is different and every family's journey looks a little different too. We're here to offer expert guidance and reassurance, not rigid rules, because *you're* the expert in your family.

Taking care of yourself is part of taking care of your baby. The first week isn't just about your newborn, it is about your recovery, too. We'll talk about how to heal, self-advocate and get the rest you and your partner need.

You don't have to figure this out alone. If at any point you have questions, concerns or need more support, we're here for you. Whether it's through our newborn care services, a phone call or text, or this guide.

Let's Get Started!



Physical & Mental Recovery in the First Week Postpartum

Your body just did something incredible. Whether you had a vaginal birth or a C-section, your postpartum recovery will take time, patience and support. The first week home is a period of adjustment, not just for your baby, but for you too.

Let's talk about what's normal in postpartum recovery, how to support your healing and action steps you and your partner can take today to prepare.

What's Normal in the First Week?

Bleeding & Discharge (Lochia)

Did you know? Postpartum bleeding lasts an average of four to six weeks, but the heaviest flow is typically within the first 10 days.

- It's normal to have heavy bleeding in the first few days, tapering off into lighter spotting.
- Clots smaller than a quarter are normal, but call your provider if you're soaking through a pad in an hour or passing large clots.

Pain & Cramping

Did you know? Your uterus expands to about 500 times its normal size during pregnancy. After birth, it takes around six weeks to shrink back down, which is why you may experience painful contractions known as afterpains.

- These cramps may be stronger during breastfeeding due to the release of oxytocin, which helps the uterus contract.
- Perineal pain (if you had a vaginal birth) or incision discomfort (if you had a C-section) can last several weeks but should improve gradually.

Emotional Highs & Lows

Did you know? Up to 80% of new moms experience the baby blues, which typically peak around days 45 postpartum and improve within two weeks.

- Mood swings, irritability, or unexpected tears are completely normal as hormones shift. [Learn more about the difference between typical baby blues and postpartum depression.](#)
- If feelings of sadness, anxiety, or hopelessness persist beyond two weeks, it may be a sign of postpartum depression or anxiety, and it's important to reach out for support.
- If you ever have feelings that scare you, it's time to talk to your provider or call 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262) for 24/7 free confidential support for pregnant and new moms. If you are in mental health distress or have a suicidal crisis, call or text the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988 for free and confidential support.

Exhaustion & Interrupted Sleep

Did you know? New parents lose an average of 109 minutes of sleep per night in the first year of their baby's life.

- The combination of birth recovery, hormone changes and round-the-clock newborn care can leave you feeling depleted.

- Even though sleep is disrupted, prioritizing rest whenever possible is essential to healing. The sink full of dishes and growing laundry mountain can wait—better yet, enlist the help of family and friends to do basic household chores so you can get some much-needed rest.

How to Support Your Healing

Rest When You Can

While you may not always be able to “sleep when the baby sleeps,” taking breaks, lying down and minimizing non-essential tasks can make a big difference in how rested you feel. Here are some more tips to help get rest:

- Try not to use your phone before sleep; blue light emitted from screens suppresses melatonin, the hormone that helps us rest.
- Mindful deep breathing helps switch gears from awake to sleepy. Try a simple mindful breathing technique like 4:7:8:



Hydrate & Nourish Your Body

Did you know? Your body loses approximately 4–6 pounds of water weight in the first week postpartum. Drinking plenty of water and eating nutrient-dense meals will help replenish fluids, promote healing, and support energy levels.

- Use Ice, Heat, Compression & Pain Relief as Needed
- For vaginal births, perineal ice packs and sitz baths can help with swelling and discomfort.
- For C-section recovery, keep the incision clean and follow your provider's care instructions for pain management.
- Consider using an abdominal binder to support your abdominal muscles, reduce lower back pain and improve mobility.

Ask for & Accept Help

- Call on your village. Let others prepare meals, run errands, or care for the baby while you focus on recovery.
- If you have a partner, make a list of household tasks in advance. Decide which are essential and which can wait. Your partner does the household essentials because your essential task is recuperation.

Monitor Your Symptoms

While discomfort is normal, severe pain, excessive bleeding, fever or extreme emotional distress are signs to call your provider. Be sure that your partner or other trusted adult understands these symptoms as well so they can look out for you too.

→ Action Step: Create a Postpartum Recovery Plan Before Baby Arrives

Create a postpartum recovery plan that includes rest, nourishment, and support. Include the following in your plan:

- Meal Prep: Planning simple, nutritious meals before the baby arrives will help sustain your energy and reduce daily stress. Stock the freezer ahead of time with ready-to-go crockpot meals or casseroles. Add a salad and voilà you'll have a nutritious meal on hand with minimal effort.
- Sleep Planning: Coordinate with your partner or support network to share night duties, ensuring you get uninterrupted blocks of sleep.
- Lean on Your Support System: Do you have neighbors or loved ones who want to help? Jot down the 3–5 tasks that need to be done consistently: laundry, vacuuming, running to the store for food, whatever you might need. Then when they ask how they can help, [hand them the list!](#)
- Talk with your partner or another trusted support person about how you can put your plan into action once the baby is home. Taking small, actionable steps now can make your postpartum experience smoother.
- Put Rest on the Registry: If you don't have family or friends that can step in to support you, consider adding services to your baby registry. BabyList.com for example has postpartum care, errands and food delivery options to add to your Registry.

➔ **Bonus Action Step: Prepare a Postpartum Recovery Basket** - A simple but essential hack to keep everything you need within reach.

Stock Your Basket with:

- Peri bottle (for gentle cleansing)
- Maternity pads
- Ice packs or witch hazel pads for perineal relief
- Stock Your Bedroom Basket with:
- Nipple balm if breastfeeding
- Pain relievers as recommended by your provider
- Your favorite water bottle (hydration is key in recovery!)
- Nutrient-dense snacks like granola or protein bars that you can easily eat one-handed!

You Deserve Support, Too

Postpartum recovery isn't just about getting back to "normal." It's about allowing your body and mind the time they need to adjust to your new normal. Give yourself grace. You are healing, learning and keeping a whole other human alive all at once.

Understanding Newborn Sleep & How to Get the Rest You Need

If you're feeling exhausted right now, you're not alone. The first few weeks with a newborn bring round-the-clock feedings, unpredictable sleep and major adjustments for your whole family. But here's the good news: Your baby's sleep habits are temporary, and understanding what's normal before baby arrives can make this phase more manageable.

Why Do Newborns Wake So Often?

It might feel like your baby is waking up all the time. And that's because they are! The reasons are biological: they have tiny stomachs, short sleep cycles

1. newborns have tiny stomachs so they need to eat frequently, usually every 2-3 hours, because their tummies can't hold much milk at once.



2. Reason #2 newborns wake often is because their sleep cycles are short. Unlike adults, who cycle through deep and light sleep over 90 minutes, newborns spend 50% of their sleep in active, light sleep and cycle through sleep stages every 40 - 60 minutes. This means they wake up a lot, and that's completely normal.

3. Frequent waking is also thought to be [protective](#). Your baby's brain is developing rapidly and waking frequently helps prevent overly deep sleep, which is thought to be a natural safeguard against Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Did you know? Studies show that newborns spend up to 16-18 hours sleeping per day, but in short, fragmented stretches. That's why it feels like you're up constantly. The key takeaway is that frequent night waking is biologically normal and expected in the first few months. But that doesn't mean you have to suffer through exhaustion alone. If you can plan for times when a partner or other trusted adult can care for baby for a few hours, you can

Now that we know the *why* behind why baby wakes so often, let's talk about the *how* of newborn and infant sleep.

Safe Sleep Guidelines & Creating a Healthy Sleep Environment

The safest way for your baby to sleep is on their back on a flat, firm sleep surface with nothing but a fitted sheet. Additionally, the American Academy of Pediatrics AAP recommends:

- **Back to sleep, every time** - Always place your baby on their back for sleep, including naps.
- **Room-sharing (not bed-sharing)** - Your baby should sleep in the same room as you for the first 6 months, but in their own crib, bassinet or bedside sleeper.
- **No blankets, pillows, or stuffed animals** - Keep the sleep space free of loose bedding, bumpers, or toys to reduce the risk of suffocation.
- **Use a firm, flat mattress** - Soft surfaces like couches, adult beds, or loungers are unsafe for sleep.
- **Dress your baby appropriately** - Overheating is a risk factor for SIDS. Keep the room at a comfortable temperature 68-72°F and dress your baby in a light sleep sack or wearable blanket instead of loose blankets. Weighted sleep sacs are not recommended.

→ Learn more about safe sleep guidelines [here](#).

Maximizing Your Own Rest (Even in Short Stretches)

While infant sleep can be unpredictable, yours doesn't have to be. You may not be able to get a full 8 hours, you can take steps to maximize the sleep you do get.

1. Take shifts if possible - If you have a partner or other trusted adult who can help overnight, divide the night into shifts so each of you gets at least one long stretch of sleep. For example, one person handles 7PM-1AM, and the other takes 1AM-7AM (or any other time blocks that work for you).

Even better, give each other an entire night off to maximize the benefits of deep restorative sleep. And yes, you can have a night off even if you're breastfeeding! You'll still nurse when baby is hungry, but your partner covers everything else: they'll bring baby to you but then change all diapers and soothe baby back to sleep in another room. If you're pumping, your partner will do milk storage as well as clean the pump.

Minimal sleep disruption leaves those who are breastfeeding with at least an hour more of sleep on your "off" nights. Here's a schedule to swap nights or take shifts:



Time	MON/TUES	WED/THUR	FRI/SAT
7pm-9pm	YOU	PARTNER	YOU
9pm-11pm	YOU	PARTNER	YOU
11pm-1am	YOU	PARTNER	YOU
1am-3am	PARTNER	YOU	PARTNER
3am-5am	PARTNER	YOU	PARTNER
5am-7am	PARTNER	YOU	PARTNER

Alternate being COMPLETELY OFF on Sundays

Let Mommy Sleep

2. Accept help

This may sound obvious but if a trusted friend or family member offers to watch the baby while you nap, say yes! Even 30 minutes of sleep can help reduce exhaustion and improve mood. And knowing that a break is in sight gives you a mental boost. Sleeping when the baby sleeps isn't always practical or possible, but simply resting quietly when you can (rather than doomscrolling) will give you the boost you need to get through the day.

3. Prepare for overnight feeds - If bottle-feeding, have bottles prepped in advance. If breastfeeding, keep a water bottle and easy snacks by your bedside and have the pump ready to go if you plan to pump. Be sure that diapers and wipes are also stocked.

4. Let go of non-essential tasks - Laundry, dishes and emails can wait. *Your* rest is just as important as your baby's care. If well-meaning visitors want to help, you can assign them household tasks.

When Overnight Newborn Care Can Help

Some families manage newborn sleep on their own, while others seek additional support and both choices are valid. If exhaustion is affecting your mental or physical health, overnight newborn care can be a game-changer. A certified newborn care provider (also known as a night nanny or night doula) comes to your home and cares for your baby while you rest.

What does an overnight newborn care provider do?

- Handles nighttime feedings, diaper changes and soothing.
- Helps establish a healthy sleep routine for your baby.
- Provides expert guidance on newborn care and postpartum recovery.
- Gives parents the opportunity to sleep & recover while knowing baby is in safe, capable hands.
- Prepares the family for the day with clean, sterilized pump and bottle parts and a record of baby's night.
- Documents all baby's activity through the night

Did you know? Overnight care is typically a private pay expense but more and more insurance companies are covering postpartum doula care. Additionally, your employer might offer care through their employee benefits program.

If you're struggling with exhaustion or need extra support, you are not alone. We're here to help.

→ **Actionable Takeaway: Create a Sleep Plan**

Tonight, set yourself up for better rest with these simple steps:

1. Plan overnight shifts with your partner so both of you get at least one stretch of uninterrupted sleep.
2. Prep bottles or set up a bedside feeding station so nighttime wake-ups feel easier.
3. Create a simple wind-down routine for yourself, even if it is just five minutes of deep breathing or a warm drink before bed.
4. Explore overnight newborn care options if exhaustion is making recovery harder.

Breast, Bottle & Formula What to Expect in Your Baby's First Week of Eating

One of the biggest stressors for new parents is feeding. Making sure your baby is eating enough, figuring out a schedule and while troubleshooting challenges along the way can be difficult! Whether you're breastfeeding, formula feeding or doing a combination of both, knowing what's normal can help ease the anxiety that comes with those first few days of feeding:

1. Hunger cues & feeding schedules in the first week
2. Breastfeeding essentials: latching, positioning, and troubleshooting common challenges
3. Formula feeding tips & how to make nighttime feeds easier
4. What's normal vs. when to reach out for help

Hunger Cues & Feeding Schedules in the First Week

Newborns don't eat on a set schedule. You may see 2 or 3 hour intervals emerge, but instead of watching the clock, watch for their hunger cues to know when your baby is ready to eat.

Early Hunger Cues:

- Rooting (turning head toward anything that touches their cheek)
- Sucking on hands or fingers
- Smacking or licking lips
- Opening and closing their mouth

Late Hunger Cues:

- Fussing or whimpering
- Crying - this is a very late-stage cue—try to catch hunger signs earlier for easier feeding and to keep baby comfortable. Crying usually means swallowing air which can become trapped and make baby uncomfortable.

Did you know? In the first few days, your baby's stomach is the size of a cherry and can only hold small amounts of milk at a time. This is why frequent feeding is completely normal.

Breastfeeding Essentials: What to Expect in the First Week

If you feel like you're breastfeeding ALL THE TIME, you're doing it right!

Newborns nurse frequently—every 1-3 hours—especially during cluster feeding, when they want to eat almost constantly for several hours. Remember that cluster feeding also helps stimulate your milk supply and is completely normal, even though it can be tiring!

When Will My Milk Come In?

In the first few days, your body produces colostrum, the thick, nutrient-rich milk packed with antibodies. Around days 2-5, your milk "comes in," meaning your breasts will start producing larger amounts of transitional milk.

Signs Your Milk Is Coming In:

- Breasts feel fuller or firmer
- Leaking or tingling sensation
- Baby is swallowing more frequently during feeds

Breastfeeding is a supply and demand relationship so the more time the baby spends at the breast, creating demand, the more supply will be promoted.

Latching, Positioning & Troubleshooting Common Challenges

A good latch is essential for pain-free feeding and effective milk transfer.

Signs of a Good Latch:

- Baby's mouth is wide open, covering both the nipple and areola (not just the tip)
- No clicking or smacking noises
- Baby's lips are flanged outward, not tucked in
- You feel a gentle pulling sensation—not pinching or pain

If feeding is painful, unlatch and try again! Break the latch by gently inserting a clean finger into the corner of your baby's mouth and adjusting their position.

STEPS TO A GOOD LATCH



Tickle your baby's lips with your nipple. This will help baby open their mouth wide.



Aim your nipple just above your baby's top lip. Make sure your baby's chin isn't tucked into their chest.



Aim your baby's lower lip away from the base of your nipple. Baby's lips should be turned outward like a fish. Your baby should lead into the breast chin first and then latch onto your breast. Your baby's tongue should be extended, and your breast should fill your baby's mouth.

Image From: WIC Breastfeeding Support USDA

Breastfeeding Positions to Try:

- Cross-Cradle Hold Provides good control for newborns
- Football Hold Great for C-section recovery moms
- Side-Lying Hold Ideal for night feeds and resting while nursing

Breastfeeding positions



Cradle



Laid back



Football hold



Cross-cradle



Side-lying



Australian hold

Managing Engorgement & Avoiding Mastitis

Once your milk comes in, engorgement, when your breasts feel overly full, swollen and tender, is common.

To relieve engorgement:

- Nurse frequently—your baby is the best way to relieve fullness!
- Use warm compresses or a warm shower before feeding to help with letdown.
- If breasts feel too full for the baby to latch, try hand expressing a little milk first.
- After feeding, apply cool compresses to reduce swelling.

Signs of Mastitis:

If you're experiencing any of the following, please call your provider ASAP. Mastitis can worsen quickly if untreated:

- Red, warm, or painful lump in the breast
- Flu-like symptoms (fever, chills, body aches)
- Sudden pain or swelling in one breast

If you're formula feeding, feeding cues and schedules are similar to breastfeeding. Newborns typically eat 1-2 ounces every 2-3 hours in the first week.

Tips for a Smooth Formula Feeding Routine:

- Use paced bottle feeding - Hold the bottle horizontally and let the baby suck actively to prevent overfeeding.
- Prep bottles in advance - Having a few pre-filled bottles stored in the fridge can make nighttime feedings easier.
- Try different nipple flows - Some babies prefer a slower or faster flow — experiment if your baby is struggling.

Did you know? Formula takes longer to digest than breastmilk, so formula-fed babies may sleep for slightly longer stretches between feeds.

What's Normal vs. When to Reach Out for Help**Normal Newborn Feeding Behaviors**

We hear a lot about getting baby on a schedule but what this really means is just allowing their natural routine to emerge. In the first weeks, while baby is still growing and adjusting to life outside the womb, all of these behaviors are normal:

- Eating every 1-3 hours
- Cluster feeding (especially during growth spurts)
- Gulping or noisy sucking at the start of a feed
- Spitting up small amounts of milk

Call your pediatrician if your baby:

- Has fewer than 5 wet diapers per day by day 5
- Is extremely sleepy and difficult to wake for feeds
- Is losing more than 10% of their birth weight
- Has green or bloody spit-up

The good news about infant feeding and weight gain is that you will have scheduled pediatrician visits before going home with baby as well as during their first week of life. You can still call the pediatrician anytime or drop in for a weight check to be sure they are feeding well and gaining weight.

→ Actionable Takeaway: Set Up a Nighttime Feeding Station

Middle-of-the-night feedings can feel exhausting, but a little preparation can make them smoother.

Set up a bedside feeding station with:

- Pre-filled bottles (for formula-feeding parents) or extra burp cloths for nursing sessions
- A nightlight (so you don't have to turn on bright overhead lights!)
- A water bottle & snacks for you because feeding a baby is hungry work!
- Clean burp cloths and extra bibs and diapers at the ready

Feeding your baby whether by breast, bottle or both is a learning process and you're doing great. Trust your instincts, be patient with yourself and don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it

Baby Care 101 - Diapering, Bathing & Soothing Your Newborn

Caring for a newborn is a 24/7 job, and if you're feeling a little unsure about things like diapering, bathing, and soothing, you're not alone! Every new parent has questions, so let's break down the basics so you can feel more confident handling everyday baby care.

Diapering 101 – How Many Diapers a Day?

One of the first ways you'll monitor your baby's health is through dirty diapers. The number of wet and dirty diapers can give clues about whether your baby is eating enough and staying hydrated.

What's Normal?

Day 1 - 1 wet & 1 dirty diaper

Day 2 - 2 wet & 2 dirty diapers

Day 3 - 3 wet & 3 dirty diapers

Day 4+ - Around 6-8 wet diapers and at least 3-4 poops per day

The color of baby's poop changes, too:

Days 1-2 - Dark, tarry meconium (first stool)

Days 3-5 - Greenish-brown transitional stool

Day 5 - Yellow, seedy stool (if breastfed) or brownish, pasty stool (if formula-fed)



Wet diapers in 24 hours*			Poopy diapers in 24 hours*	
Day	# of Diapers	Color	# of Stools	Color/Consistency
Day 1	1	Pale	1	black, tarry/sticky
Day 2	2-3	Pale	1-2	green/black, changing
Day 3-4	3-4	Pale	At least 3	green/yellow, soft
Day 4	4-6	Pale	At least 3	yellow/seedy, soft/liquidy
Day 5+	6+	Pale	At least 4	yellow/seedy, soft
6 weeks	6+	Pale	May slow down to 1 every day or every few days	yellow/seedy, soft

Arizona Department of Health Services

When to Call the Doctor:

- No wet diapers for 6 hours
- Poop is white, red, or black after meconium passes
- Diarrhea (liquid stool) for more than 24 hours
- Severe diaper rash that won't heal

Pro Tip: Change baby's diaper every 2 to 3 hours or whenever it's wet or soiled to prevent diaper rash.

Pro Tip #2: Allow baby to have some time with their diaper off when they're completely dry before applying diaper cream.

Umbilical Cord Care, Circumcision Care & Baby's First Bath

Your baby's umbilical cord stump will dry up and fall off within 1-3 weeks. Until then, keep it clean and dry to prevent infection.

Caring for the Umbilical Cord:

- Gently clean around the base with a dry cotton swab.
- Fold the diaper down so it doesn't rub against the stump.
- Avoid soaking it in water—stick to sponge baths until it falls off.

Call your pediatrician if the stump:

- Smells foul or has yellow-green discharge
- Looks red or swollen
- Is still attached after 3 weeks

Circumcision Care - What is circumcision?

Circumcision is the procedure in which the skin (foreskin) covering the end of the penis is removed.

How to care for a circumcised penis on a newborn baby?

1. Use a gentle washcloth and warm water (not a baby wipe) to wipe away any bits of fecal matter at diaper changes.
2. Practice sponge baths only until baby's penis is healed and his umbilical cord drops off.
3. After diaper changes, squeeze petroleum jelly on the inside of clean diaper to prevent diaper from rubbing against circumcised penis.
4. Some doctors also advise covering the area with a piece of gauze.

Call the pediatrician if any of the following present after circumcision:

- Baby does not urinate within 6-8 hours after the procedure.
- Continuous bleeding or more than quarter-sized spot of blood on the diaper.
- Redness around the tip of the penis that gets worse after 3-5 days
- Yellow discharge that lasts more than a week. (Some discharge/ yellow oozing is normal.)
- Fever

When Can Baby Have Their First Bath?

Until the umbilical stump falls off, stick to [sponge baths](#), a gentle wipe-down with a warm, damp washcloth. Once the stump is gone, you can give your baby their first real bath!

Baby Bathing Tips:

- Keep the water warm, not hot (around 100°F / 37°C). You can test the water on your wrist to be sure it's not too hot.
- Use a soft washcloth to clean baby's face, neck folds, and diaper area.
- Keep baths short, 5-10 minutes is plenty) to prevent your baby from getting cold.
- Use fragrance-free baby soap as newborn skin is delicate!

Pro Tip: Bathing 2- 3 times a week is enough in the first few months. Newborns don't get that dirty and their skin is sensitive.

Soothing a Fussy Baby – What Actually Works?

All babies cry, it's how they communicate! But if your baby seems fussy no matter what you do, try these universal soothing techniques:

- **Swaddle**- Snug wrapping helps babies feel safe, like in the womb.
- **Side/Stomach Position** - Hold the baby in a side-lying or tummy-down position across your arm while supporting their head and neck.
- **Shush or "Ohm" Chant** - Try shushing a bit louder than baby's cry. White noise mimics the sound of the womb. You can also try to use a deep voice and slowly repeat "ohm".
- **Swing** - Gentle rocking or movement is calming.
- **Suck** - A pacifier or finger-sucking can help soothe a baby.

12 Soothing Techniques

- 1) **White noise:** Rhythmic whooshing sound helps baby get and stay asleep.
- 2) **OM Technique:** Lay baby on your chest & chant a low ohm..ohm...
- 3) **Exercise ball:** Hold baby & sit on an exercise ball and very gently bounce.
- 4) **Baby-wearing:** Keep baby close & cozy, or even try skin to skin this way.
- 5) **Swaddling:** There's a reason every newborn looks like a baby burrito!
- 6) **Skin to skin contact:** "Kangaroo care" not only calms babies, but also helps them grow and develop.
- 7) **Take a bath with baby:** Gently holding baby, take a soothing, warm bath together. (Bonus: bathing calms us too!) [@letmommysleep](#)
- 8) **Try the colic hold:** Hold baby tummy down, face out on your forearm & gently rock back and forth. Pressure on the tummy helps relieve gas.
- 9) **Or try The Hold:** made famous by pediatrician Dr. Robert Hamilton, baby is leaned forward, arms secured and you slightly jiggle their bottom.
- 10) **Eyebrow Stroke:** When something comes close to our faces, instinct is to close our eyes, so slowly stroking baby's eyebrow allows their eyes to shut.
- 11) **Massage:** Lay baby down facing you and gently massage the top and sides of the head, face and jaw, then arms, tummy and legs.
- 12) **Turn down stimuli:** Grown-ups are used to a lot of lights and sounds but babies aren't. Head to a dim, quiet area to remove all that stimuli.

Gas, Reflux, or Colic—How to Tell the Difference

If your baby is crying excessively, arching their back or seems uncomfortable, it could be due to gas, reflux, or colic. Here are the basics of each:

Gas – There are a few tell-tale signs that baby has trapped air making them uncomfortable

- Baby pulls legs up to tummy
- Bloated belly or frequent tooting
- Fussy after feedings

How to Help:

1. Burp baby often meaning before, during and after feeds.
2. Bicycle baby's legs to help relieve trapped gas. This is where baby lays on their back and you help them by moving their legs back and forth as if they were riding a bicycle.
3. Use an anti-colic bottle and slowest nipple flow to reduce air intake when bottle feeding.

Reflux – Reflux is the backward flow of milk or formula back up baby's esophagus. While medications might be suggested to help soothe the burning of the liquid coming back up, the "cure" for reflux is time, as baby's esophageal muscles grow and get stronger.

The signs of reflux are:

- Frequent spit-up (but baby is still gaining weight)
- Gagging or coughing during feeds
- Arching back after eating

How to Help:

1. Keep baby upright for at least 20-25 minutes after feeding.
2. Try smaller, more frequent feeds.
3. Talk to your pediatrician if spit-up is excessive or baby isn't gaining weight.

Colic and the Period of PURPLE Crying – Colic is intense, inconsolable crying for 3 hours a day, 3 days a week. It can also called PURPLE Crying. It often peaks in the late afternoon and early evening (you may have heard this called "the witching hour"). There's no obvious cause and baby is otherwise healthy.

If your newborn cries for long stretches despite being fed, changed and soothed, they may be going through the Period of PURPLE Crying, a normal developmental phase when babies cry more than usual. (source: [National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome](#))

What is PURPLE Crying?

PURPLE Crying is the term used to describe the increased crying that peaks around 28 weeks of age and gradually improves by 34 months.

The acronym PURPLE stands for:

- P- Peak of Crying - Crying increases around 2 months and gradually decreases.
- U- Unexpected - Crying may come and go for no apparent reason.
- R- Resists Soothing - Even tried-and-true methods may not work.
- P- Pain-like Face - Babies may look uncomfortable even when they're not in pain.
- L- Long Lasting - Crying episodes can last up to 5 hours a day.
- E- Evening - Crying often happens in the late afternoon or evening.

Did you know? The Period of PURPLE Crying is a normal phase of newborn development and does not mean anything is wrong with your baby.

How to Cope with Colic PURPLE Crying

1. Try different soothing techniques - Swaddling, white noise, gentle rocking or a pacifier may help. Remember what worked last week, may not work this week.
2. Create a calming routine before colic begin- A quiet house and dim lighting can help signal relaxation.
3. Take breaks when needed. If you feel overwhelmed, place your baby in a safe space (like their crib) and step away for a few minutes to reset.
4. Make a plan so that your partner or other trusted adult can help. Colic can be exhausting.
5. Try a change of scenery; a bath or a walk outside might help.

Call your pediatrician if:

- Your baby's cry sounds different than usual.
- They are running a fever 100.4°F or higher for newborns).
- They are refusing to eat or showing signs of dehydration.
- You feel something just isn't right

→ **Actionable Takeaway** - PURPLE Crying is temporary, but it can be stressful. To prepare for this tough situation, write down at least 3 people you can reach out to if you need a break, whether it's a partner, friend or family member.

The Postpartum Support System: You Don't Have to Do It Alone

We've learned about postpartum recovery, newborn sleep, feeding and baby care. But here's one of the most important lessons of all: you don't have to do this alone.

The transition to parenthood is life-changing. Between exhaustion, round-the clock baby care and healing from birth, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. But trying to "power through" on your own is not a badge of honor, it is a recipe for burnout.

Common Mistakes New Parents Make in the First Week

Nobody is born knowing exactly how to care for a newborn, it's something you learn along the way. But with a little preparation you can try make the early days a little easier.

You don't have to do it alone – Sometime parents feel pressure to handle everything alone; caring for the baby, managing the household and even hosting visitors. This leads to exhaustion and delays your recovery.

Instead: Accept help when it's offered and ask for what you need. If a friend offers to bring a meal, say yes! If your partner or family can take over a feeding so you can sleep, let them. You can also compile a list of tasks to have at the ready if someone asks "What can I do to help?"

Don't neglect your own recovery - It's easy to focus entirely on your baby and ignore your own physical and emotional needs. But healing from birth takes time and rest is essential.

Instead: Prioritize postpartum healing just as much as newborn care. Sit down when eating, rest when you can, drink plenty of water and don't ignore signs that you need more support.

Don't overlook Mental Health- The emotional rollercoaster of postpartum is real. Many parents dismiss their feelings of anxiety, sadness or frustration as "just exhaustion." But mental health is just as important as physical health.

Instead: If you're feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or disconnected, talk to someone. Postpartum mood disorders are common and treatable. You are not alone, and help is available. Call or text: 1-833-TLC-MAMA. Also take time for you and your partner learn the difference between typical [Baby Blues and PPD](#) before baby arrives so they can look out for you too.

Don't Feel Guilty About Accepting Help

Many parents believe they "should" be able to do it all or that hiring help makes them less capable. This isn't true. In fact, this is the first and only time in American history that many new parents do not have support from the community and family. Parenthood is not simply meant to be a solo journey.

Instead: Shift your mindset. Getting help—whether from family, a postpartum doula or an overnight newborn care provider—does not mean you're failing. It means you're prioritizing your well-being for the good of yourself and your family. We've all heard the importance of putting on our own oxygen mask before helping others. Postpartum support is your oxygen!

Ways to Accept & Ask for Help:

1. Delegate non-baby tasks. Have someone else cook meals, handle laundry or walk the dog.
2. Say "yes" to specific offers. Instead of saying, "I'll let you know if I need anything," ask for something tangible like groceries or a load of dishes.
3. Lean on your partner or other trusted adult. Share baby care duties and communicate about what you need, especially if you are breastfeeding. Breastfeeding in itself is a full-time job!
4. Join a postpartum support group. Talking to other parents can be incredibly validating. Your hospital or birthing center most likely has one but you can also reach out to MOMSClub.org to find a group of new parents in your zip code.
5. Consider professional postpartum support. There are paid options that can help you.

Understanding Payment Options for In-Home Postpartum Support

One of the biggest barriers to getting help is cost. But did you know that some insurance plans now cover in-home postpartum visits?

Here's what you need to know:

- Postpartum home visits by a Registered Nurse are sometimes covered under maternal mental health or newborn care benefits.
- Some private employers offer night nanny and doula care as an employee benefit.
- Some Flexible Spending Accounts FSA or Health Savings Accounts HSA allow funds to be used for postpartum support services.
- If you're considering a night doula, there are [financing](#) options to pay-over-time
- You can put postpartum help on your Baby [Registry](#).

→ Actionable Takeaway: Build Your Postpartum Support Plan

Today, take 5 minutes to list out three people or resources you can turn to for support in the coming weeks.

Examples of Postpartum Support:

- A friend or family member who can bring meals or help with chores.
- A partner or co-parent who can take overnight shifts.
- A lactation consultant if feeding challenges arise.
- An overnight newborn care provider if you need extra rest.
- A local or online support group for emotional reassurance.

The more support you have, the smoother your postpartum experience will be.

Final Thoughts- You're Not Alone in This Journey

Parenthood is hard but you don't have to figure it all out on your own. Help is available through formal support groups, your community and your loves ones. Support is out there and you deserve to rest, heal and be cared for, too. As you continue navigating the fourth trimester, remember that there are a lot of right answers when it comes to parenting and as long as your family is safe and healthy, you're doing it right.