

## **SIX-WEEK POST-DELIVERY PLANNER**

### **A Health Care Guide for New Mothers**

**Y**ou have spent nine months preparing for your baby's birth. You have probably read every book, article, and website to make sure you were eating right, exercising at the appropriate level, and taking the necessary vitamins and supplements. Your preparation has paid off...

### **CONGRATULATIONS!!**

**N**ow that you have given birth, it is important to keep up the healthy habits you practiced throughout your pregnancy. Your doctor or nurse is the best resource for making sure you are on track. To get ready for your six-week post-delivery visit, review this planner and bring it with you to your check-up. Use it to help discuss your health and well-being with your doctor or nurse.

<b>Diet, Nutrition, &amp; Exercise</b>	<b>Goals</b>
<p><b>Weight Loss</b>  <i>Returning to pre-pregnancy weight is a common concern and goal for women. Combining a healthful diet with exercise will help most women lose weight gradually during the months after delivery.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ GOAL: Lose weight gradually</li> <li>§ 4.5 lbs per month maximum after first month post-delivery (except high pre-pregnancy weights)</li> <li>§ Be patient</li> <li>§ A minimum of 1,800 calories per day (you may need more if breastfeeding)</li> <li>§ Drink plenty of fluids (moderate caffeine intake, limited alcohol)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Nutrition</b>  <i>A well-balanced and nutritious diet is key for the health and well-being of women throughout the post-delivery period. Nutrients such as calcium and iron are essential for women before, during, and after pregnancy. Vitamin and mineral supplements can help women ensure they consume the nutrients they need.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ GOAL: 1,000 – 1,300 mg of calcium daily</li> <li>§ Food sources include low-fat and fat-free dairy products and green leafy vegetables such as broccoli, kale, and collards</li> <li>§ Most multivitamins and prenatal vitamins, for example, supply less than one-third of the 1,000 to 1,300 milligrams of calcium recommended daily</li> <li>§ If food choices fall short of supplying the recommended amount of calcium, taking a calcium supplement such as TUMS® with meals can help fill the calcium gap</li> <li>☐ GOAL: 15 – 18 mg of iron daily</li> <li>§ Food sources of iron include lean beef, dried fruits, figs, tofu, oysters and spinach</li> <li>§ You may require additional iron from an iron supplement when the interval between pregnancies is short</li> </ul>
<p><b>Exercise</b>  <i>Exercise regularly after delivery and make it a part of daily life. The appropriate level of exercise will depend on your level of fitness and recuperation from delivery.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ GOAL: Strengthen the pelvic floor and abdominal muscles; reduce the risk of urinary stress incontinence</li> <li>§ Ask your doctor or nurse about performing Kegel exercises</li> <li>☐ GOAL: Keep bones strong, tone and shape your body</li> <li>§ Do weight-bearing exercises such as walking or cycling that complement calcium to maintain strong, dense bones</li> <li>§ If lactating, breastfeed before exercising to minimize discomfort</li> </ul>

Physical, Emotional, & Sexual Needs	Goals
<p><b>Physical Exam</b>  <i>Don't be embarrassed to discuss with your doctor or nurse all aspects of your physical health including important conditions that may result from delivery.</i></p>	<p>☐ GOAL: Thorough post-delivery health exam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Talk to your doctor or nurse about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Breast condition</li> <li>§ Constipation</li> <li>§ Hemorrhoids</li> <li>§ Incontinence</li> <li>§ Healing below the birth canal</li> <li>§ Vaginal discharge</li> <li>§ Varicose veins</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Emotional Adjustment</b>  <i>Inform your doctor or nurse if you have been feeling overwhelmed, anxious, sad, isolated, nervous, incompetent, or exhausted.</i></p>	<p>☐ GOAL: Good health and well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Take time for yourself</li> <li>§ Get enough rest</li> <li>§ Call on family and friends for help when needed to reduce stress</li> <li>§ Consider joining a mothers' or postpartum support group</li> <li>§ Ask your doctor or nurse about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Mood swings or "baby blues"</li> <li>§ Symptoms of post-delivery depression</li> <li>§ Strategies for preventing depression</li> <li>§ Planning for hormonal shifts during weaning or when starting your period again</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexuality &amp; Contraception</b>  <i>A lack of sexual desire is very common in the post-delivery period and normal during the first couple of months after giving birth. Every woman has her own timetable. Discuss your readiness to start having sex again with your partner.</i></p> <p><i>Return to fertility is unpredictable and may return before the onset of regular menstrual cycles, even in breastfeeding women. Discuss family planning and the health benefits and risks of all appropriate contraceptive options with your doctor or nurse.</i></p>	<p>☐ GOAL: Healthy sexuality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Keep an open dialogue with your partner about your readiness for making love</li> <li>§ Make time for cuddling and kissing to re-establish physical closeness</li> <li>§ Ask your doctor or nurse about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Resuming sexual intercourse</li> <li>§ Minimizing discomfort</li> <li>§ Effects of breastfeeding or hormones on sexual desire</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>☐ GOAL: Post-delivery contraception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Consider whether or not you'd like to have more children</li> <li>§ Ask your doctor or nurse about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Contraceptive options</li> <li>§ Use of birth control prior to resuming sexual activity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP)  
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