

*Thriving
Together*

YOUR
POSTPARTUM
PACKAGE



Prepared for you by the physicians
at Foothills Maternity Group



Dear Parents,

Congratulations on the birth of your new baby! Welcoming your baby is the beginning of an exciting new chapter. As you get to know your newborn, it's important to remember that caring for yourself is just as important as caring for your baby. Recovery, healing, and adjusting to life with your growing family all take time, and you don't have to navigate it alone.

We are honoured to have been part of your pregnancy journey and look forward to continuing to support both you and your baby throughout the postpartum period.

At Foothills Maternity Group, we offer a number of postpartum services to support you and your baby after delivery, including:

- Postpartum and newborn care
- Breastfeeding and infant feeding support
- Lactation Consultant services
- Postpartum contraception counselling
- Pelvic floor recovery resources
- Maternal mental health support
- Newborn circumcision services

Attached is a list of resources and information that we feel are helpful in guiding you through this important time.

We also encourage you to explore the Healthy Parents Healthy Children website (<https://www.healthyparentshealthychildren.ca/>).



Topics covered on the website are:

- Safe sleep
- Feeding your baby
- Pelvic Floor Health in the postpartum period
- Birth Control/Contraception options
- Mental Health resources

Once again, congratulations and we look forward to seeing you in the upcoming weeks at your appointments.

Warm Regards,

The staff and physicians of the Foothills Maternity Group

www.foothillsmaternitygroup.com



If you are struggling with any symptoms of anxiety (worry that interferes with your function and quality of life) or depression (sadness that impacts your function and quality of life) or suicidal thoughts please reach out to your doctor to discuss the best management plan for you.

A mental health toolkit is a set of resources you can utilize to help you manage any symptoms of anxiety or depression including any changes in sleep, appetite, self worth, focus and general enjoyment in life.

Your mental health toolkit should include the following:

1. Regular exercise

- a. 30 mins of movement most days of the week that gets your heart rate elevated.
- b. This can be broken up into 10 min intervals.
- c. Having a friend/partner to help you do the exercise can make it easier to do.
- d. Try not to leave exercise to the end of the day as often it's much harder to do at the end of a day.

2. Good quality sleep

- a. Sleep Hygiene is a set of 'rules' that help to improve sleep quality and quantity
- b. Key parts of sleep hygiene are consistent wake up times and bedtimes, not staying in bed if you haven't fallen asleep after 30 minutes, being off all screens one hour prior to bed and using a consistent 'winddown' routine (ie. guided breathing exercise, journaling, adult coloring book, gentle yoga stretches etc) to help train your brain that it's time to get ready to sleep.

3. Healthy Eating

- a. Eating foods that are from the Canada food guide, with a balance of either protein or fat containing foods paired with a carbohydrate help to improve your energy and mood and ensure stable blood sugars.
- b. Caffeine can interfere with sleep and can increase anxiety so if you are having caffeine try to limit this to the early morning only.

4. Social supports

- a. Reach out to trusted family and friends to share how you are feeling and see if there are things they can help you with (ie. meal support, walking buddy, help with childcare).
- b. For many people social media can worsen their mental health so consider taking a break and connect in person instead of through social media.

5. Talk with a Professional

- a. Psychologists, Social Workers and trained mental health support workers can help you navigate the various uncertainties that can occur in life.
- b. No cost **self referral** resources include:

- Access Mental Health: call 403-943-1500 to access fully funded counselling, offered through Recovery Alberta.
 - Distress Centre: 403-266-4357, 300-1010 8th Ave SW, <https://distresscentre.com>, 6 funded sessions plus drop in crisis counselling)
 - Eastside Family Counselling: drop in counselling, first come first serve www.woodshomes.ca/eastside-community-mental-health-services/
 - Employee Assistance Programs (if this is often offered through your job as part of your benefits)
 - One Step At a Time Counselling through Calgary Foothills PCN: call 587-774-9736 to have fully funded counselling session funded by the PCN
 - Eunoia Virtual Counselling - <https://www.eunoiamedical.ca/new-patients>
 - Families Matter has many counselling options as well as supports groups including for Dads <https://familiesmatter.ca/resources-2/>
- c. No cost **physician referral** Resources
- Perinatal Mental Health Program offered through Access Mental Health (24 weeks of pregnancy to 12 months postpartum), your doctor can refer you.
 - Owl Pod - funded virtual counselling, your doctor can refer you.

6. Mindfulness

This is an evidence based skill that improves mental health and is great for managing labor pain too. The more you practice this the better it works.

Apps we recommend include:

- MindShift CBT- Anxiety Relief (free App store)
- Smiling Mind: Mental Wellbeing (www.smilingmind.com.au, free App store)
- Headspace (limited content through Netflix for free, or full access through the App store for a monthly fee, 14 day free trial)
- Calm (www.Calm.com) If guided breathing isn't for you this has relaxing bedtime stories to keep your brain distracted while you fall asleep, this has an annual cost but the app can be shared with up to 6 people through your family app account.

7. Use trusted websites for good quality information

www.anxietycanada.com

www.psychologytoday.com/ca to search for registered psychologists

pregnancyinfo.ca (general pregnancy information from the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada, has a section on mental health under postpartum category)

mothertobaby.org (medication and environmental exposure information in pregnancy and breastfeeding)

<https://cmha.ca> (Canadian Mental Health Association)

8. If you are in Crisis you can get free 24 hour supports at:

- a. Distress Centre (call or text 403-266-4357, <https://www.distressentre.com>)
- b. Calgary Women's Shelter: call 403-234-SAFE (2733), text 403-604-6689, www.calgarywomensshelter.com
- c. Alberta Mental Health Line: call toll free 1-877-303-2642)
- d. 2-1-1 (call 2-1-1 toll free, 170 languages offered, can text INFO to 211 if this is better than a call)
- e. National Suicide Crisis Helpline (call 9-8-8 toll free)

Contraception after Baby

You will need to have reliable contraception to prevent an unplanned pregnancy after your baby is born. If you are breastfeeding or pumping breast milk you need to pick a form of contraception that does not have estrogen in order to prevent a reduction of your breast milk supply. Breastfeeding alone is not considered highly effective birth control (see notes below for more details). Please remember you can ovulate (and therefore get pregnant) before your period comes back and so you need to have a contraceptive plan in place prior to your period coming back if you do not wish to be pregnant.

Contraceptive Options safe in Breastfeeding/Pumping (in order of the most reliable choices for pregnancy prevention.)

1. Mirena or Kyleena IUD: progesterone containing IUD, inserted into the uterus at the doctors office, Mirena lasts for 8 years, Kyleena lasts for 3 years.
2. Nexplanon Implant: progesterone containing implant that the doctor puts under your skin in the upper arm in the office, lasts for 3 years.
3. Copper or Flexi T IUD: (no hormone) inserted into the uterus at the doctors office, duration depends on size of IUD.
4. Progesterone only Birth Control Pill: contains progesterone, example Movisse brand, plan to switch to a combined contraceptive pill once you are no longer breastfeeding for improved pregnancy prevention.
5. Condoms: (no hormone) you can use the Plan B Emergency Contraceptive Pill which is available without a prescription (ie. over the counter) if the condom breaks, falls off or isn't used. The Plan B pill contains estrogen therefore could temporarily impact milk supply.
6. Breastfeeding: This method of birth control has the highest failure rate of those listed. In order to be effective your baby needs to be less than 6 months of age, no use of formula supplementation, no long breaks between feeds (ie. not longer than 4 hours between feeds), and you must not have a return of your periods. Please note that you can still get pregnant before your period returns. If you are certain you do not want to get pregnant it is recommended that you use an alternative method of birth control.

Contraceptive options if you are not breastfeeding/pumping (in order of most Reliable pregnancy prevention)

1. Mirena or Kyleena IUD
2. Nexplanon Implant
3. Copper or Flexi T IUD
4. Combined (Estrogen and Progesterone) Oral Contraceptive Pill (this is more effective than the progesterone only birth control pill) or Contraceptive patch or Vaginal Ring
5. Condoms (with Plan B Emergency Contraceptive Pill if there is a condom failure).

For more detailed information about the above contraceptive options please visit the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada website sexandu.ca/contraception which lists the effectiveness, advantage and disadvantages of each contraceptive choice.



Postpartum Pelvic Floor Information

Whether you delivered your baby vaginally or had a c-section, being pregnant alone can change the function of your pelvic floor and core muscles. During pregnancy your abdominal muscles are stretched and your pelvic floor carries extra weight. During labour and vaginal birth your pelvic floor stretches to allow the baby's head to pass through the vagina. During a c-section your abdominal muscles are separated to access the uterus to deliver your baby.

Having a weak abdomen or pelvic floor may cause:

- Leaking from your bladder
- Painful intercourse
- Pelvic, abdominal, hip, or back pain. It can also lead to pain/injury in your knees or elsewhere.

The good news is with specific therapy or strengthening these symptoms can resolve. Here are some resources to help:

1. Your body after baby video produced by the AHS pelvic floor clinic:



https://youtu.be/0Xa5b7ewyLk?si=k6kdR8Q_iaZIPN1N

2. AHS webinars by the pelvic floor clinic - recovery after baby 2x1 hour online Zoom classes:



<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/findhealth/service.aspx?Id=1008362>

3. Look in your Healthy Parents book pages 49-50, or on the website:

- 4.

<https://www.healthyparentshealthychildren.ca/im-pregnant/overview-of-pregnancy/physical-activity/#pelvic-floor>



5. See a Pelvic floor physiotherapist - for clinics look for the link or our website or ask your physician for a list.



Safe sleep for your baby's first year



Babies spend a lot of time sleeping and need a safe sleep environment. Research tells us that creating a safe sleep environment will help reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and prevent other sleep-related injuries and death in babies. To learn more about safe sleep for your baby's first year, scan the QR code using your smartphone or visit HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca

Put your baby on their back to sleep, every sleep



Always put your baby on their back to sleep for their first year. This lowers their risk of SIDS. Even when your baby can roll over on their own, research tells us to still put them on their back to sleep. If they roll over, you don't have to move them back.

Back to sleep, tummy to play

When your baby is awake and with you, place them on their tummy to play several times every day.

Tummy time helps prevent flat areas on their head. It also helps with your baby's development and makes their body stronger to be able to roll, sit and crawl.

Use a crib, cradle or bassinet that is free of clutter



A clutter-free crib, cradle or bassinet reduces your baby's risk of SIDS and helps prevent them from being trapped, strangled or suffocated. A safe crib, cradle or bassinet has:

- a firm, flat mattress that's in good condition and fits snugly into the frame
- tight-fitting bottom sheet for the mattress
- no stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads or other items such as heavy blankets, quilts, sheepskins or positioning devices, such as wedges or rolls

Putting a blanket over top of the crib, cradle or bassinet to block out light is not advised, as it can cause the baby to overheat. If the blanket falls on your baby, it can also decrease airflow and could smother them. Make sure the crib, cradle or bassinet follows government safety standards.

Playpens are for play

Playpens shouldn't be used for unsupervised sleep – they don't meet the same safety requirements as cribs, cradles and bassinets.

Car seats are for travel

Car seats keep babies safe during travel and shouldn't be used for sleeping. It's not safe for babies to sleep in a seated position. Plan ahead. When you get to where you're going, take your baby out of the car seat and put them on their back to sleep on a safe sleep surface.

Keep your baby warm, not hot



If your baby gets too hot (overheats), it increases their risk of SIDS. Your baby is too hot if they're sweating or they feel too warm to the touch. Your baby is safest when the room temperature is comfortable for an adult wearing light clothing. If your home is cool, choose a warmer sleeper for your baby. Try not to over-bundle or over-dress your baby. Your baby does not need a blanket. If you choose to use a blanket, make sure it's:

- light-weight
- firmly tucked under 3 sides of their mattress
- only reaches up to your baby's chest

Keep spaces smoke-free before and after birth



Help keep your baby healthy by being smoke-free. Babies whose mothers smoked while pregnant are at a much greater risk of SIDS. Babies who are exposed to second-hand smoke, both before and after birth, are also at a greater risk of SIDS. Make sure no one smokes around your baby—at home, during travel or while being cared for by others.

For help to cut back or quit smoking, visit albertaquits.ca or call toll-free **1-866-710-QUIT (7848)**.

Breastfeed your baby



Breastfeeding may offer some protection against SIDS. Exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life is recommended. Taking your baby into bed for feeding or for comfort is risky if you fall asleep. Lying down to feed is an effective feeding position for many moms. However, it's easier to fall asleep if you're in this position, especially if you're tired.

To stay awake while feeding your baby in your bed, wipe your face and neck with a wet cloth or keep the room lights, TV or music on. Put your baby on their back in their own crib, cradle or bassinet if you feel sleepy.

Swaddling

Swaddling is often used to calm and soothe an infant. Babies do not need to be swaddled for sleep. To watch a video on swaddling, scan the QR code with your smartphone.



Share a room with your baby



Room-sharing means that your baby sleeps in the same room as you or another person, but on a separate sleep surface like a crib, cradle or bassinet. It's recommended that you share a room with your baby for at least the first 6 months. Room sharing reduces the risk of SIDS when your baby sleeps on separate surface.

Room-sharing:

- keeps your baby close and safe
- supports the bond between you and your baby
- makes it easier to learn and respond to your baby's cues
- makes it easier to feed your baby, especially at night. If you bring your baby into bed for feeding, put them back in their own crib, cradle or bassinet before you go to sleep.

Don't share a bed, sofa or any other sleep surface with your baby

Bed or sleep surface-sharing means that a baby sleeps on the same surface like a bed or sofa with another person. This includes a parent, caregiver, child or even a pet. Twins and other multiples are also safer when sleeping on their own and not sharing a sleep surface. Bed or surface sharing can increase the risk of SIDS and falls, strangulation or suffocation if:

- trapped between a mattress and headboard or footboard
- wedged against a wall or person
- tangled in bedding, pillows or cushions

If you choose to bed or sleep surface share:

- never sleep with your baby on any soft or padded surface such as a sofa, upholstered chair, bed with a soft mattress or bedding, water or air-filled mattress
- keep bed covers, blankets and pillows far away from your baby
- make sure that you and your partner know when your baby is in bed with you

Never sleep with your baby if you or your partner:

- smoke
- are overtired from stress or lack of sleep
- have taken alcohol, marijuana, street drugs or any prescription, over-the-counter or herbal medicine - these can make you less able to respond to your baby's needs

If you choose to bed share

Make sure you follow all the information provided. Remember that taking these steps may reduce some of the risk, but it does not make bed sharing safe.