



# Postnatal Care

## Congratulations on the arrival of your baby!

- Please remember to resume your supplements immediately after birth to support your energy, healing and the increased demands of breastfeeding. Your post-birth requirements may differ; you should check with your Naturopath about what changes you may need to make.
- It is normal to experience the postpartum blues 3-10 days after the birth, and these feelings may continue for a week or so. It is also normal to feel sensitive and teary at this time. You may even cry often for the first month, even if you don't feel sad.
- It is normal to feel anxiety and as if you are not coping.
- Your baby will lose 5-10% of its body weight in the first week but should regain it by 2-3 weeks.
- The uterus takes up to 6 weeks to revert to normal size.
- Sex is discouraged until at least 6 weeks post-birth to allow time for healing. Lubricant is recommended, especially whilst breastfeeding.
- Your libido may not return until ovulation has begun.
- Be aware that you may ovulate before your period returns, meaning you could conceive before you have a period. Contraception will, therefore, be necessary if you wish to avoid pregnancy.
- Keep yourself and your feet warm and allow your muscles to replenish after the labour.
- Please sleep when the baby sleeps and let the house be messy and the washing pile up for at least the first 6 weeks, to ensure your post-birth recovery.

## To heal the perineum post-vaginal-birth

- Frozen icy poles – applied to the perineum

## To heal the pelvic floor post-birth

**Vaginal Birth:** From 6 weeks (no earlier), begin core exercises to reduce the risk of incontinence. These include Pilates, Swiss ball exercise, or yoga with a trained physio/Pilates/yoga instructor. High-impact exercise should be avoided until the pelvis has stabilised; however, walking and swimming are encouraged.

**Caesarean delivery:** No strenuous activity for 6-12 weeks; get medical clearance first. Slowly increase strength and aerobic exercise.





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## Weight Loss and Exercise

The extra weight gained during pregnancy is often the first thing many women like to see disappear after birth. After six weeks, you can use light exercise to help you achieve your weight loss goals; please discuss your requirements with your naturopath.

For most women, breastfeeding naturally achieves the weight loss required. The 3kgs of body fat gained during a healthy pregnancy is the body's strategy of providing the necessary fuel to produce breast milk.

It is important to remember that breast milk is carbohydrate-rich, so breastfeeding women will require good-quality complex carbohydrates in their diet. If these needs aren't met, they can quickly crave sugar and processed carbohydrates, which is when weight loss becomes challenging. Remember to continue to eat protein with every meal.

Women who are not breastfeeding can resume a diet with regular protein and complex carbohydrates.

## Tips for possible problems with the newborn

### Nappy rash:

- Let the baby have as much time without a nappy as possible, and provide the baby's bottom with fresh air and dappled sunshine.
- Treatment: Calendula and zinc Weleda nappy care cream is available on Vital.ly. If the nappy rash doesn't improve, check with your Naturopath, as there may be underlying issues that need to be addressed.

### Cradle cap:

- Common in most babies, it may begin at 6 weeks and last 6-9 months.
- Possible treatments include coconut oil, bicarb soda paste (made with bicarb and water) left on for 30 minutes and washed off.
- Cradle cap brush/comb - these can be purchased and used when the head is wet.





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## Formula

For women who are having trouble breastfeeding, the following formulas are recommended (these are Australian brands):

- Bellamy's organic
- Holle – cows and goats (goats not to be used until 6 months)
- Karicare goatmilk infant formula
- Novalac – not organic but has specialised formulas for colic, reflux, constipation and diarrhoea

\*Do not use a soy formula

If you have trouble breastfeeding and need support, contact the Australian Breastfeeding Association on 1800 686 268 or a similar service in your country.

## Nappies

The regular nappies in the supermarket have potentially toxic substances contained in them. There are a variety of non-toxic and environmentally friendly nappies, both cloth and disposable.

Brands include (Australian):

- Bumboo
- Baby beehinds
- Pea pods
- Bambo-nature
- Seventh Generation
- Naty

Non-toxic disposable nappies are about 3x the price of regular nappies, so if this is not an option, you can use a thickly applied barrier cream on the baby's bottom. Use a combination of organic castor oil and zinc cream.

Regular baby wipes contain irritating chemicals and should not be used on newborns. There is a range of natural alternatives available worldwide; however, cotton wool dampened with water or breast milk may be used.





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## When to consult your Naturopath

We recommend a consultation 1-2 weeks after the birth and 6 weeks post-birth. However, you may need to consult your Naturopath earlier if you experience the following:

- If you had an unplanned caesarean
- If you or your baby are given antibiotics
- If you experience uterine retraction after-pains post-birth
- If you lose more than 500mL of blood during labour
- If you are experiencing heavy blood loss after 24 hours post-birth
- If you experience mild depression or anxiety. However, contact PANDA 1300 726 306 (or a similar service in your country) if you are experiencing post-natal depression or need support and consult your doctor if this is severe
- If you drop weight very quickly post-pregnancy or experience palpitations, insomnia and irritability
- If you experience weight gain and dry skin
- If you experience constipation or incontinence
- If you have poor milk supply, mastitis or nipple thrush (contact asap)
- If baby is not gaining weight after 2-3 weeks
- If baby experiences: colic, reflux, nappy rash, oral thrush, blocked tear duct, diarrhoea or constipation

