

OTTER TAIL COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH POSTPARTUM CARE NEWSLETTER

Congratulations on the birth of your baby. The weeks and months after birth are vital not only for infant health but also for the health and well-being of women and families as a whole. The first 12 weeks postpartum, also known as the 4th trimester, is part of a continuum of pregnancy to recovery and family adjustment. This is a tender, sleep-deprived time. We are here to help! Please don't hesitate to call us for support. 218-998-8320.

MOTHER'S POSTPARTUM RECOVERY

TAKING CARE OF YOU: Are you asking yourself, why didn't anyone tell me about _____?

americanpregnancy.org/healthy-pregnancy/first-year-of-life/postpartum-recovery/

WHAT IS A POSTPARTUM PLAN? A postpartum plan is an outline of support and help that you might like after you give birth. Your postpartum plan is a guide so that you can share your needs and get ready for the days ahead.

<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/infographics/your-postpartum-care-team>

BIRTH CONTROL: Research shows that mothers and babies are healthier when mothers wait at least 18 months after giving birth before getting pregnant again. This is particularly true if you had a c-section. Pregnancies that happen too close to each other can increase the chance of a baby being born too early, increase the chance that a woman will have complications during pregnancy, increase family stress, and strain family finances. Talk to your health care provider and for more information about possible choices for you, scan here:

<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/postpartum-birth-control>

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE 4TH TRIMESTER: newmomhealth.com

POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION Up to 80% of women experience mild mood changes during pregnancy and in the first few weeks after having a baby. However, up to 1 in 5 moms and 1 in 10 dads will suffer a more serious form of the typical "baby blues", known as a perinatal mood disorder (PMD). While the term "postpartum depression" is most commonly known, perinatal mood disorders can include depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), bipolar mood disorders, and postpartum psychosis. Symptoms can appear any time during pregnancy and the first 12 months after childbirth. Women of every culture, age, income level and race can develop perinatal mood and anxiety disorders.

If you feel that you need help, talk with your health care provider, family, or friends. You can also **call a support line (dial 2-1-1), or text MN to 741741, or Postpartum Support International Helpline: 1-800-944-4773 or text Help to 800-944-4773.**

What should I do if I'm having thoughts of suicide or of harming myself or my baby?

If you or someone you know is having a mental health emergency, you can call the 24/7 toll-free Otter Tail County Mobile Mental Health hotline at 800-223-4512 or dial 911.

Postpartum Support International:
postpartum.net



BABY CARE

FEEDING: Babies depend completely on their caregivers for comfort, care, love, and nutrition. Feeding is a big part of the 4th Trimester and beyond, because newborns need to eat often through the day and night. Human milk is biologically designed to feed human babies. Lactation (mothers producing milk) is also an important part of women's health and recovery. Whether feeding baby at the breast, with a spoon, cup, bottle, or other methods infant feeding can be both deeply rewarding and difficult. Babies need care during the night and parents need sleep. There are always trade-offs between infant and self-care. For a complete guide to feeding options: [cdc.gov/nutrition/infantandtoddlernutrition/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/infantandtoddlernutrition/index.html)

LACTATION SUPPORT: Eighty percent of women start out breastfeeding in the US, but nearly half wean earlier than they want to. We provide lactation support. Please contact us at 218-998-8320.

SLEEP: When baby is sleeping, place the baby on his back in the crib or bassinet with a fitted sheet only. This will help reduce the risk of SIDS, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Stress around sleeping through the night is common. Infant night waking is a part of human development. Babies are not little adults – they sleep differently. Moms and partners sleeping in new ways is a parent milestone. The process will be ever-changing, like other aspects of your baby and you.

For adults, sleeping for short periods can feel very hard and it affects our bodies and minds. Frequent infant waking is normal...and it is challenging for families.

It can be helpful to **make a nighttime parenting plan. Here are some ideas:**

- Consider sleeping in shifts. This means that one caregiver is responsible for responding to infant cues and maintaining a safe sleep environment for part of the night, while the other caregiver or support person takes responsibility for the remainder of the night.
- When you wake up to care for your baby, feed (or cuddle) on an adult bed. The AAP recommends this arrangement instead of sitting on a couch or

chair, because of the possibility of the caregiver falling asleep.

- The safest place for an infant to sleep is on a separate sleep surface designed for infants close to the parents' bed. For a complete safe sleep guide: [cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/features/baby-safe-sleep/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/features/baby-safe-sleep/index.html)

CRYING AND SETTLING: New parents have wonderful and not so wonderful experiences with their new infants, but crying is one of the most challenging. Crying can be normal development for an infant. If you are having trouble settling your infant, give us a call at 218-998-8320. More information on soothing: [dontshake.org/purple-crying](https://www.dontshake.org/purple-crying)

APPOINTMENTS: The appointment with your medical provider in a few weeks is to see how your body is recovering after giving birth. Make sure to call your health provider if things are not going well, such as bleeding or flu-like symptoms (fever, overly tired and chills). Your baby will have several appointments the first year. These routine medical visits include screenings at the right age, immunizations, and a review of the child's health.

TUMMY TIME: You've likely heard the importance of tummy time. Did you also know that you should limit the time your baby is in a "container"? For more information, ideas, and suggestions, go to these pages.

[Tummy Time Tips](#)

[Back to Sleep, Tummy to Play](#)

EARLY DEVELOPMENTAL RESOURCES:

- **Text4Baby** is a free mobile health service designed to promote maternal and child health through text messaging. [text4baby.org](https://www.text4baby.org)
- **Vroom** Free science-based tips and tools to help parents and caregivers support early brain development. [vroom.org](https://www.vroom.org)
- **Zero to Three** This is a website whose mission is to ensure that all babies and toddlers have a strong start in life. [zerotothree.org](https://www.zerotothree.org)
- **Kelly Mom** provides evidence-based information on breastfeeding and parenting. [kellymom.com](https://www.kellymom.com)

