

# Postnatal care

Information for the public

Published: 20 April 2021

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## Caring for women and their babies in the first 8 weeks after birth

The postnatal period is the time after a woman has given birth. These days and weeks are a special and important time for women, their babies and the whole family. Every woman has different needs, and each will have different questions and worries during this time. It is important that women see the right professionals at the right time to get the care and advice they need after giving birth.

We want this guideline to make a difference to women, babies and their families in the postnatal period by making sure:

- women feel they are listened to and their postnatal care is driven by what matters to them
- women get better information and support to care for themselves and their baby, including how to stay safe if they share a bed with their baby
- women always get the necessary information and support with feeding their baby
- postnatal visits are planned and spaced out better to avoid gaps in support.

## Making decisions together

The different healthcare professionals working with you should listen carefully to your views and concerns, give you clear information and discuss the options available. They should also:

- share information and guidance promptly with each other so that you feel supported by the different teams
- make important decisions jointly with you, such as when you're ready to be discharged from the hospital or birth team
- respect your choices about what's right for you and your baby.

If the information you are given does not explain things clearly to you, ask your healthcare professional for more support.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

## Where can I find out more?

The [NHS website](#) has information about [how to keep well after having a baby and where to get support](#).

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Association for Post Natal Illness \(APNI\)](#), 0207 386 0868
- [National Childbirth Trust \(NCT\)](#), 0300 330 0700
- [The Lullaby Trust](#), 0808 802 6869

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with women and their families, and staff who treat and support them in the postnatal period. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

ISBN: 978-1-4731-4079-0