

Going Home

after Birth during the COVID-19 Pandemic



The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the experience of giving birth for many parents. This can be unexpected and difficult. If your birth plan changed or you were separated from your baby after birth, you may want additional support as you transition home. Here are some ways you can take care of yourself and bond with your baby.

Taking Care of Yourself



Your health matters

Here are some suggestions for how you can care for your own needs:

- Nurture yourself with a shower, bath, or other body treatments that you enjoy.
- Get as much rest as possible.
- Ask for help around your home from your partner, older children, and other sources of support.
- Take time for yourself. Sit outside, have a warm drink, watch a movie, read a book, or call a friend.



Feeling down or anxious is common

Many people feel down or anxious after giving birth. If your birth plan changed or you were separated from your baby because of COVID-19, you may feel especially down or worried. You may want to talk to a trusted friend, community member, or mental health professional about your experience. If you are having thoughts of suicide, you can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline anytime at 1-800-273-8255 (TRS: 1-800-799-4889) or chat at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat).

Bonding with Your Baby

When you care for your baby, you bond with each other. Smiles, hugging, laughter, diaper changes, holding your baby, and feedings all help you build a healthy connection with your baby. You don't have to be perfect, just do what you can, when you can.



Taking Care of Your Baby

When feeding your baby, look into your baby's eyes and smile, talk, sing, or coo as they are eating.

Nursing can be difficult. Support is available if you are struggling.

- Ask your health care provider for a referral to a lactation consultant.
- Look for a local or virtual lactation support group.

Sometimes babies will cry and fuss no matter what you do to soothe them. Crying may be normal for your baby, so do your best to stay calm. If you're having a hard time, ask for help.

- When babies are fussy they may be hungry, tired, need a nap, or want to be held.
- When your baby is tired they may want to wiggle and move around.



Interacting with Your Baby

Be gentle with yourself as you learn how to meet your baby's needs. Some babies are comforted by rocking, bouncing, singing, or quiet background noise, while others may want calm and quiet.

Sharing happiness and joy is good for you and your baby. Singing, reading, and playing with your baby helps to steady your baby's mood, makes them feel safe, and helps their brain develop.

Try:

- reading
- looking in a mirror
- playing music
- laying on the floor together for tummy time
- playing peek-a-boo
- making sounds with your baby

Physical touch and comfort through snuggling and cuddling is good for your baby. However, it is important to pay attention to your baby's cues to learn how much touch your baby likes.

Resources



- Your Healthcare Provider
- For 24-hour emotional support and referrals contact the Washington Recovery Help Line or the mental health crisis line in your area warecoveryhelpline.org
- National Suicide Lifeline suicidepreventionlifeline.org 988 (For TTY Users dial 711 then 988)
- La Leche League (lactation support) llli.org
- March of Dimes Postpartum Depression marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/postpartum-depression.aspx
- Perinatal Support Services perinatalsupport.org/for-parents
- Period of Purple Crying purplecrying.info

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