



FAMILY-CENTRED POSTPARTUM EXPERIENCE

The postpartum period is a significant time for the mother, baby, partner, and family. It is a time of transition and adaptation and is formative for everyone. There are physiological adjustments for both mother and baby, and significant social and emotional adjustments for the entire family. Providing family-centred care to women, their partners, and families during the postpartum period is an essential component of the care offered by all institutions, agencies, and programs.

While the postpartum period is a normal, healthy time of life, it is challenging for families even as parents get comfortable with their roles. It is important that HCPs who are working with mothers, partners, newborns, and families focus on their individual needs and values.

Key family-centred care recommendations:

- Treat families with respect, dignity, and kindness, and learn about and respect their values and beliefs, using them to guide their care.
- Maintain open and ongoing communication with the woman and her partner/family;
- Plan the timing and purpose of each postpartum contact in partnership with the woman and her partner/family based on their individual needs.
- Provide culturally competent and safe care with cultural humility.
- Provide information and support in a timely fashion, according to the needs of the woman, her partner, and family. Information should be evidence-based and accessible according to their culture, language, and abilities so that they can promote their own and their baby's health and make informed decisions about their care and any necessary treatment.
- Support and promote the physical well-being of mother and baby and enable the mother to rest and recover from the physical demands of pregnancy and birth.
- Foster the developing relationship between the baby and their mother as well as the mother's partner and family.
- Support the mother's and her partner's emotional and mental health needs.

For references consult **Chapter 5: Postpartum Care** in: Public Health Agency of Canada. Family-Centred Maternity and Newborn Care: National Guidelines. Ottawa (ON): PHAC; 2020.

For more information about the **Family-Centred Maternity and Newborn Care: National Guidelines**, or to download this document, please search “maternity and newborn care” on **CANADA.CA**.