

BABYMOON

When a couple is newly married, it is our tradition to support them in their new relationship as they begin their lives together. We call this time the honeymoon. A new baby and his/her parents also have a time of readjustment as they revel in their love and the beginning of their lives together. This time is called the babymoon.

- Limit visits. Consider making a sign for your door reminding visitors that baby and mother are recovering from birth and getting to know one another. You may want to ask visitors to call back at or after a certain time.
- Mom, stay in your nightgown for two weeks. It will remind visitors (and YOU!) that you are recovering from birth and need to be given consideration and care.
- One week IN the bed, one week ON the bed, and one week AROUND the bed after your birth.
- Arrange for family/friends to bring meals and do housework. Have a friend use one of these sites to help organize meals for you after baby comes: www.mealtrain.com, www.carecalendar.org, mealbaby.com.
- Prepare meals now and freeze them. Dinner is just a quick microwave away!
- Anyone who comes to visit should be willing to help. Should you put a sign on the door with a list of what needs to be done? Or, when visitors come, ask them to throw in a load of laundry, run the vacuum or play with your toddler while you shower or eat or sleep. Let others do for you! Most people will be thrilled for the opportunity.
- If you are blessed with a baby shower, ask for meals in lieu of gifts. A loved one or friend appearing at your door with a ready, hot meal is the most welcome of sights when there is a new baby in the house.
- Beware of postpartum depression. While it is normal for emotions to fluctuate, contact your caregiver, doula, or therapist (or your pastor or your friend or your mother or anyone else until you get someone to listen to you) if these feelings are affecting your functioning, if you fear you will hurt yourself or your baby, or if you just feel as though something is wrong. Adjusting to life with a new baby is rarely easy and you deserve support.
- It is normal that not every moment (not even most moments) of your babymoon is a lovely, perfect, touchy-feely, warm, soft and fuzzy moment. It is perfectly normal to have times when you mourn your "old" life, the way you used to be able to pick up and go without tons of equipment, maybe your old job or pastimes, or your old "self". Most new mothers feel overwhelmed and unsure of themselves at some point. Know that the new baby season is JUST a season, and one that passes very quickly at that. Although it sounds trite, sometimes just being pampered yourself is all that is lacking. Take a long bath while Daddy holds and cares for baby. Take a walk. Arrange for a short, but much-needed talking date-on-the-sofa for just the two of you while baby sleeps. Get a massage, from a professional or from a friend. If the feelings become overwhelming or don't go away, get some help.
- Join a play/meeting group with other new moms, even if an on-line internet list. It is very valuable just knowing that you are not alone and that others have had (or are having) the same feelings. La Leche League meetings are a great place to meet new moms.
- If you have had a traumatic birth and/or a cesarean section, you are at greater risk for postpartum depression. You may consider attending an International Cesarean Awareness Network (ICAN) meeting or subscribing to the on-line list. (<http://ican-online.org/>) The support you receive there will be invaluable.
- Take care of yourself and each other. You will be better parents (and spouses) for it.