



Homebirth Services in Central Vermont

Post-Partum

The time to start thinking about life post-partum is before you have the baby! Whether this is your first baby or a subsequent birth, it's important to consider what you may want and need after your baby arrives. Chances of experiencing full-blown post-partum depression are greatly reduced when women have the support and resources they need right after birth. In many cultures it is common for women to have family and friends attending to them for weeks: cooking, cleaning, bathing, and taking care of older children so that the new mother may have time to rest and recover and get to know her new baby. Here in the US we tend to move quickly to get "back to normal" without giving ourselves a chance to heal and a chance to just spend time focusing on the new life in the house.

If you are lucky, and more people are, family and friends will be asking you what you need for the baby. There are practical things like diapers and car seats that are helpful but the following are things you might want to consider asking for in lieu of gifts:

Meals for the freezer: Tucking food away in the freezer is a great way for everyone to have healthy meals in the days and weeks after the baby comes. When mom is with baby and dad is tired too, from taking care of the older siblings or the house, it is a wonderful thing to be able to pull out something delicious and just heat it up. If you are short on freezer space, it might make sense to have people bring meals every other day – they can meet the baby (time-limited visits so mom doesn't get worn out feeling like she has to entertain) and then you have a hot meal and (hopefully!) leftovers for the next day.

Help around the house: If your partner is able to stay home and help out for a week or two that's fantastic. You may want to consider asking for help from others after that time. It can be a very lonely feeling to suddenly be left alone with the new baby just as you're coming down from the high of giving birth and your milk is coming in! Having someone come over a few afternoons a week to help with laundry, dishes, groceries, running a sitz bath for you, making a pot of tea and some snacks or even to hold the baby while you get a nap or take a shower can ease you into caring for baby and household on your own.

If you are given a baby shower that is a good time to circulate sign-up sheets. If you don't have a shower of one is planned for after the baby arrives, think about making phone calls or emailing to set up a calendar of help. Now is not the time to be shy or feel like you don't want to bother anyone – most people are thrilled to be able to help out a family with a new baby.