

# Postpartum care

**The ultimate guide to supporting and caring  
for you and your family during your  
Postpartum**



**PERTH DOULA SERVICES**  
*A Labour of Love*

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# WELCOME TO POSTPARTUM

Postpartum support and care are essential to ensure the physical and emotional well-being of mothers during this vulnerable and transformative period.

If I could tell every person who is preparing for birth one thing it would be:

***Take the time to plan and prepare for your postpartum.***

Postpartum support and care is essential to ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing of the mother during this transformative time.

Throughout this guide I have provided you with information, resources, checklists, recipes and plans that can help you have a positive postpartum experience and set the foundation for a happy and healthy mother. All mothers deserve to have a nurturing, supportive and loving postpartum recovery.

It's okay to take each day as it comes and to ask for the help when needed because when a mother is respected, loved and nurtured, she and her whole family will benefit.



# SELF-CARE IN POSTPARTUM

**Self-care is not selfish, but necessary for a new mother's well-being. Self-care allows mothers to better care for themselves, bond with their baby, and navigate the joys and challenges of postpartum.**

Taking care of oneself allows mothers to recharge, recover, and better meet the demands of caring for their newborn.

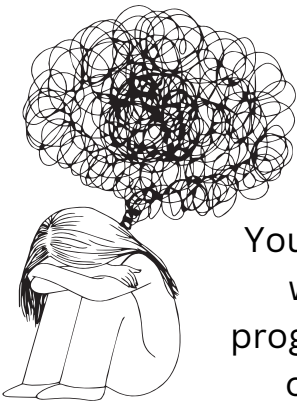
**Here are some important aspects of self-care in the postpartum period:**

- Rest & sleep
- Nutrition & Hydration
- Emotional well-being
- Connecting with others
- Gentle exercise
- Debriefing
- Seeking help
- Delegating tasks

It's crucial for new mothers to ask for & accept help. Enlist the support of family, friends, or postpartum doulas to assist with household chores, cooking, or caring for bub. Delegating tasks allows mothers to focus on themselves, and adjust to the demands of motherhood more effectively.



# EXPLORING COMMON POSTPARTUM FEELINGS



You've birthed your baby now what? Your massive hormonal shift will begin the week following delivery and your estrogen and progesterone will both plummet. The postpartum hormone crash is considered to be the largest hormone change in the shortest amount of time for a woman.

*Please note every experience is different. If you believe you experience these feelings below for longer than two weeks or have concerns, please contact your healthcare provider.*

## Overwhelmed

Whether by fear, joy, worry or a mix of them all. Feeling overwhelmed in the early days of motherhood is a familiar feeling.

**You can try:** Take some deep breaths in and out. Take yourself outside into the fresh air and reset.

## Tears

Your partner asks you why you are crying and you're not sure why. Crying for no apparent reason can be expected but will pass after a few moments for most mothers.

**You can try:** Allow yourself to cry. Really feel those feelings and express yourself.

## Edgy

You may have the feeling that you need to get up and do 'something productive' around the house, but this is not the time.

**You can try:** You need to focus on resting your body. Ask your partner or family and friends to come over and for support ensuring your household tasks are done.

## Anxious

Feeling nervous and questioning each decision you are making or each and every detail can be normal to a certain extent. Especially being a first-time mum with so much access to social media and Google it can feel confusing and stressful.

**You can try:** Listen to your own intuition and it will guide the way for you. You may also want to seek out a friend for advice or make a call to your healthcare provider on a specific topic.

# TYPICAL POSTPARTUM CHALLENGES

The weeks following birth are a critical period for a mum and her baby, setting the stage for long term health and wellbeing.

You are going through multiple physical, social, and psychological changes as well as recovering from childbirth and adjusting to your changing hormones.

During this period you are adapting to sleepless nights, endless crying, nappy changes, leaky boobs or preparing bottles but slowly these will fade and your heart will be filled with the special moments and memories made through out this period of time..

Aside from the emotional changes you may face, some typical postpartum challenges may arise:

- Sore or tired from childbirth
- Weakened muscles and pelvic floor
- Period like bleeding and spotting
- Interrupted sleep schedule
- Less time for family and friends
- Less time for your family pet
- Uterine cramps also called 'after birth' pains
- Engorged and leaky breasts
- No time for cooking or housework
- Large hormonal shift
- Feeling disconnected from your body
- Emotional strain on your marriage or relationship
- Feeling of guilt if you dont have the energy for your other children

1 in 5

women are  
affected by  
Anxiety & or  
Depression





# SIGNS OF POSTNATAL DEPRESSION

*Feelings of these for more than two weeks*

- Persistent sadness, low mood, or experiencing a general lack of enjoyment or interest in activities.
- Fatigue & lack of energy, with adequate rest & sleep.
- Changes in appetite- loss or increase in emotional eating.
- Sleep disturbances, unrelated to baby's needs; difficulty falling/staying asleep, or excessive sleep.
- Easily irritated or becoming overly emotional, even over minor issues that would not typically trigger such responses.
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or inadequacy; a sense of failure as a mother, often accompanied by self-criticism.
- Difficulty bonding with the baby, emotionally detached.
- Anxiety and excessive worry, particularly related to the baby.
- Social withdrawal & isolation; avoiding social interactions, or feeling a strong desire to be alone.
- Thoughts of self-harm or harming the baby. Seek immediate support if this is experienced.

Some of these symptoms are common in early postpartum, often referred to as "baby blues." However, if they persist beyond two weeks or become increasingly severe, it may indicate the presence of PND. It is essential to reach out to healthcare professionals, such as a doctor or mental health practitioner, for an evaluation and support. Let family & friends know you are struggling.





# POSTNATAL ANXIETY & DEPRESSION

**Anxiety** refers to an agitated or 'aroused' mood - panicky, feeling overwhelmed, and/or frustrated.

**Depression** is often associated with a low mood - sadness, hopelessness, and/or withdrawal.

## Signs of Postnatal Anxiety

There is some similarity in symptoms too. For instance, many people may experience feelings of irritability and social withdrawal with both anxiety and depression. It's common for expecting and new parents to experience a 'mixed mood' (anxiety and depression symptoms at the same time). Symptoms of postpartum anxiety and depression may include:

- Persistent generalised worry, often focused on the health or wellbeing of your baby
- Feeling nervous, on edge, stressed and overwhelmed
- Abrupt mood swings, easily irritated
- Racing thoughts, thinking about all the 'what if's' (catastrophising)
- Developing obsessive or unwanted, intrusive and distressing thoughts
- Panic (racing heart, chest pain, breathless, muscle tension, shaking, faint or dizzy)
- Easily startled, feeling scared for no good reason
- Disrupted sleep patterns
- Changes to appetite
- Avoiding people or places that might trigger anxiety or a panic attack
- Withdrawing from friends and family, increased arguments with loved ones
- Feeling isolated, scared and lonely even around loved ones

MENTAL HEALTH CHECKLIST FOR NEW MUMS  
<https://panda.org.au/checklists/new-mums>

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# PREPARING FOR POSTPARTUM

During the postpartum period, I provide assistance with various tasks, such as

- Breastfeeding and lactations support/guidance.
- Newborn education
- Household chores: everyday tasks, cleaning, laundry, and dishes.
- Cooking: prepare nourishing meals or assisting with meal planning
- Grocery shopping: ensuring you have essential supplies and groceries.
- Baby care: assisting with baby, nappy changing, burping, bathing, or comforting.
- Errands & appointments: accompany you to postpartum checkups.
- Childcare for siblings for a few hours or a day so you can focus on bub & rest.
- Emotional support & listening: listen to your feelings, concerns, and experiences without judgment. Provide empathy, understanding, and a safe space for you to offload.
- Encourage self-care: watch the baby while you take a relaxing bath, practice meditation, mindfulness, or activities that help you recharge.
- Help with administrative duties: help manage documents related to bub's wellbeing.
- Offer companionship: spend quality time just chatting about Mum life!

*My key role is to alleviate your workload and be your personal google! This way you can focus on your recovery, and have all the love and support you deserve.*





# WHAT ABOUT THE DADS/PARTNERS?

Symptoms of perinatal anxiety and depression can look different for each dad, so it may go unnoticed or without support.

## Signs and Symptoms

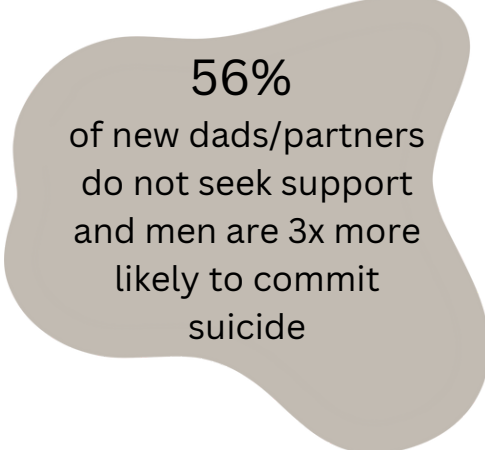
- Constant tiredness or exhaustion.
- High physical stress levels (eg headaches, muscle tension).
- Loss of interest in things you usually enjoy (eg work, relationships, down time).
- Appetite changes.
- Sleep problems (unrelated to baby's sleep).
- Changes to sex drive and desire for intimacy.
- Irritability, anger, resentment, frustration, moodiness. Fear of looking after your baby, or avoiding caring for them.
- Feeling rejected by your partner as they focus on caring for baby.
- Emotional withdrawal from your partner, baby, family, friends.
- Not wanting to communicate with your loved ones. Feeling isolated and lonely. Using alcohol or drugs to 'escape' or cope.
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide.



1 in 10  
dads will experience  
perinatal anxiety and/or  
depression



and 50%  
of fathers whose partner is  
suffering mental illness will  
also develop it.



56%  
of new dads/partners  
do not seek support  
and men are 3x more  
likely to commit  
suicide

## Getting Help

- Talk to your partner and family about your feelings
- Ask a mate for a coffee or drink and tell them you've been struggling, you may find out they have been in your position before
- Make a GP appointment to discuss your options and support

## Support Services

- PANDA - 1300 726 306
- Mensline Australia - 1300 789 978
- Dads in Distress - 1300 853 437
- Parentline - 1800 686 268
- Lifeline - 13 11 14
- Beyondblue.org.au
- dadspace.org.

MENTAL HEALTH CHECKLIST FOR  
NEW DADS  
<https://panda.org.au/checklists/newdads-and-non-birth-parents>

# EXAMPLE POSTPARTUM CARE PLAN

## PLEASE HELP US WITH

- Breastfeeding support
- Newborn education
- Groceries
- Meal prep/planning
- Empty the bins
- Hold bub while I shower
- Watch bub while I sleep
- Make lunch
- Prep dinner
- Keep us hydrated
- Change bubs nappy
- Bath bub
- Sit & have a chat!

## DAILY

- Washing
- Dishes
- Vacuum
- Tidy
- Meals

## WEEKLY

- Wash the sheets
- Mop
- Dusting
- Appointments
- Admin

***IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A  
CHILD, BUT IT TAKES A  
POSTPARTUM VILLAGE TO  
SUPPORT A MOTHER***



# POSTPARTUM CARE PLAN



PLEASE HELP US WITH

DAILY

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WEEKLY

# NURTURE YOU - SELF CARE

The newborn days are a blur for most parents. There's nothing quite as transformative, exhausting, emotional and beautiful as the transition to motherhood. Whether its your first baby or your 4th. It can seem impossible at times for self care, but caring for yourself is more crucial than ever.



## The power of self care

## Here are some ideas for self-care in early postpartum:

- ♥ Take a hot shower and put through a hair mask while the baby is napping
- ♥ Put on a fresh pair of comfy home clothes
- ♥ Light a candle and journal your current thoughts and feelings
- ♥ Go outside and take a little walk around your garden
- ♥ Have a coffee delivered and watch your favourite Netflix series
- ♥ Listen to your favourite podcast
- ♥ Fill up a bucket of warm water and bath salts and soak your feet

### Self Care:

The practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness, in particular during periods of stress.

### Nuture:

care for and protect (someone or something) while they are growing

I am all my baby needs



My best will always be enough



# NOURISHING MUMMA....

After we give birth, we often seem to forget that the body is in recovery - not just a few days or weeks but for months. During this time, we are often feeling very exhausted, both physically and mentally, so making sure that we eat at all, let alone well, can be tough at times.

**Below are some practical recipes to keep yourself nourished during your recovery and beyond.**



## Apricot, coconut and lime bliss balls

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups apricots (unsulphured)
- 1.5 cups raw cashews
- 1 cup coconut (flaked, shredded or desiccated)
- Zest of one lime

### Method:

- Place all your ingredients in your food processor/thermomix/blender
- Blend on high for 30-60 seconds mixture should stick together and form a ball when you pick it up and mould it - it can be chunky but needs to stick. If not sticky enough, add more apricots
- Form your balls, roll in left over coconut, pop in jar. Can be frozen.



## Mirella's Dairy Free Banana Bread

### Ingredients:

- 4 Mashed ripe bananas
- 100g almond meal
- 100g Spelt flour
- 50g coconut oil
- 3 Eggs
- 1.5tsp Bicarb soda
- 6 Tbsp sugar
- 1tsp Cinnamon
- 1 pinch Nutmeg
- 1 pinch Salt

### Method:

- Combine all ingredients
- Line a cake tin with oil/baking paper
- Bake for 45-50 mins on 150c



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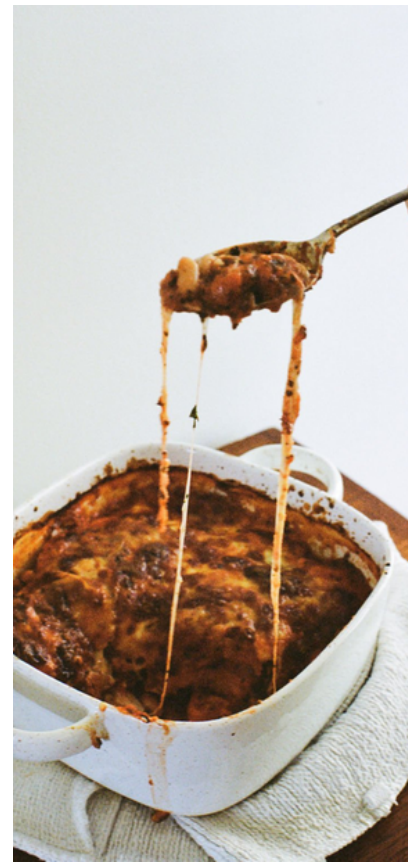
## Sweet potato, cannellini bean & mozzarella bake

### Ingredients:

- Olive oil, butter or ghee for frying
- 1 onion diced
- 3 cloves garlic
- 750ml, jar of tomato passata
- 125g frozen spinach
- 2-3 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced into 1cm wide circles
- 400g tin of cannellini beans, drained
- 500g shrink wrapped mozzarella ball
- Tasty cheese, grated

### Method:

- Place your sliced sweet potatoes into a microwave safe bowl, add about 3cm of water, pop on a lid or plate and microwave for 10 minutes or until tender. Remove and drain.
- Meanwhile, heat your oil and gently fry your garlic and onion until soft, then add passata and frozen spinach and stir occasionally until the spinach has mixed in. Salt to taste. Take off the heat. Now to layer! Start with the tomato sauce, just enough to cover the base. Add a layer of sweet potato rounds, then scatter over some beans and then rounds of mozzarella. Now start again. Depending on the size of your baking dish, you might get between two and four layers. Top with grated cheese. Its now ready to either cover with aluminium foil and be refrigerated/frozen, or be put in the oven at 180 degrees celsius for 30 minutes.
- If you're cooking it from frozen, you'll need 60-75 minutes - keep the foil on until the last half an hour.



For further nourishing  
recipies check out  
Cocoon Food to fuel  
postpartum By: Naomi  
Chrisoulakis

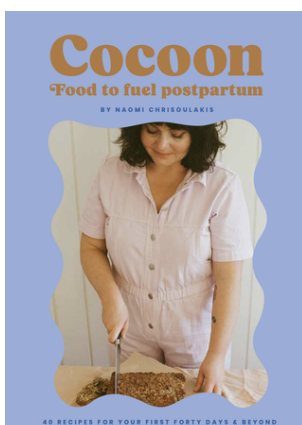
## Lemony pumpkin & coconut soup

### Ingredients:

- 1 Medium butternut pumpkin, skin removed and cut into chunks
- 1L veggie stock or water
- 400ml can coconut cream
- Zest of one lemon
- Juice of one lemon
- Salt

### Method:

- Preheat your oven to 180 degree celsius. Put pumpkin on the tray and drizzle with olive oil, cook for 30-40 mins, until tender.
- Pop into a large saucepan. Add stock/water, coconut cream and lemon zest. Bring to the boil and then simmer for 15 mins. Turn off the heat and stir through the lemon juice.
- Once cooled, blitz with a hand blender, in a thermomix or food processor until smooth. Salt to taste.



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# YOUR VILLAGE



## Meal Train

So what is a meal train? Simply, it's your friends/family bringing meals for you and your family after a new baby arrives, but in an organised, scheduled way, so that nothing goes to waste and you always have good food

### Snacks we like:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Meals we like:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## Meal Train

<https://www.mealtrain.com/about/>



# HOW CAN OTHERS NURTURE YOU?

Who is your  
postpartum  
village?

- Collect Groceries
- Meal Prep
- Empty the bins
- Sweep or vacum floors
- Change bedding
- Make her lunch
- Water the garden
- Hang out the washing
- Do the dishes
- Make the beds
- Walk and feed pets
- Organise Meal Train
- Clean toilets
- Go with mum on a walk
- Make hand held snacks
- Set up a picnic outside to encourage some fresh air

- Make sure mum is hydrated
- Bring over a coffee or smoothie
- Give mum a foot soak
- Light touch massage on shoulders and neck
- Change bubs nappy
- Play with older children
- Make older children lunch
- Bath Bub
- Hold bub while mum showers or naps
- Sit and have a chat
- Put warm socks on mums feet



# HERE IS A SAMPLE OF MY OFFERINGS



## *Menu of Offerings*

PRICES SUBJECT TO TIME & SERVICE REQ.

### **POSTPARTUM**

REVISITING YOUR BIRTH JOURNEY  
BREAST/BOTTLE FEEDING SUPPORT  
NEWBORN EDUCATION  
LIGHT DOMESTIC DUTIES  
MASSAGE  
EMOTIONAL/PHYSICAL SUPPORT  
NEWBORN CUDDLES!  
NEWBORN CARE  
ASSISTANCE WITH REFERRALS  
SIBLING SUPPORT  
EXERCISE PROGRAMME  
SNACKS/MEALS



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Encouragement  
during  
challenging  
moments

Do their share  
of the  
household  
tasks

Listen, listen,  
**LISTEN!**



## 5 ways your partner can support your postpartum

Ensure mum  
has snacks  
and water  
when  
needed

Initiate conversation about  
division of labour - Important to  
discuss this before life becomes  
busier with a baby



# *Crafting Your* **PERSONAL AFFIRMATIONS:**



I take time to rest often



I gladly welcome the help and support of others



I am doing the best I can, and that is enough

## **My daily exercise for you:**

Drop all the balls of “expectation” and only pick up one at a time, one day at a time and in your own time.

# HONOUR YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY



## The 5-5-5 Rule

In those precious weeks after birth, self-care is key. Consider the 5-5-5 rule to honour your body's recovery journey.

**5 Days in bed:** Allow your body time to rest heal and bond with your baby. Embrace cozy moments and let others pamper you.

**5 Days on the bed:** Gradually ease into more mobility while staying close to your resting space. Bond with baby and tend to your needs.

**5 Days near the bed:** Venture a bit further while staying connected to your cozy haven. Let your body guide you and enjoy your baby's company.

Remember, everyone's journey is unique. Listen to your body, and relish this transformative time.

You deserve it!



# POSTPARTUM ESSENTIALS CHECKLIST

Below you will find a range of everyday essentials that all new mums should have stocked at home.

- ♥ Large black underwear
- ♥ Maternity or overnight pads
- ♥ Nursing Pads and Nursing bra
- ♥ Pain Reliever & stool softener
- ♥ Sitz salts
- ♥ Large water bottle
- ♥ Comfortable PJ's or home clothes
- ♥ One handed nourishing snacks
- ♥ Homemade padsicles
- ♥ Peri Rinse Bottle
- ♥ Heat pack



# POSTPARTUM PLAN FOR MUM

Who is my support person if I need to talk?

Name:  
Number:

When baby won't stop crying what will I do?

Plan:

If I start to feel anxious/depressed who will I tell?

Healthcare Provider:  
Friend/Family:

If baby has a hard time feeding, who will I contact?

Name:  
Number:

What will be my mantra for the day?

Mantra?

If I need help with other children/pets who will I call?

Name:  
Number:

What easy meals do I have available?

Meals:

What self care can I do for myself each day?

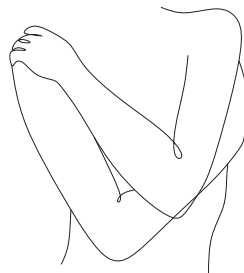
Plan:

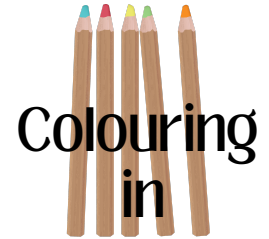
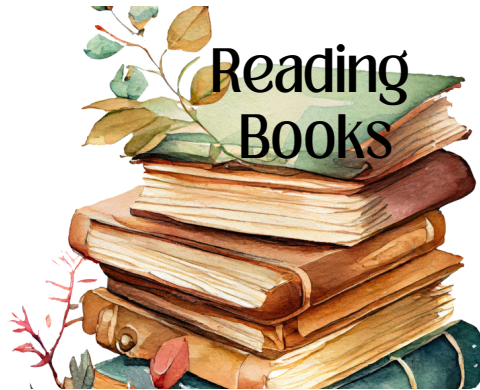
Who can watch the baby if necessary?

Name:  
Number:

Where can I go if I need to get out of the house?

Location:





# Restful activities to do with your other children

Lets play the sleep game



Watch a movie





# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## Information links and numbers:

Top tips for new parents - <https://www.sjog.org.au/news-andmedia/news/2019/01/16/08/52/top-tips>

Perinatal what? - <https://www.sjog.org.au/blog/2019/jan/perinatal-what>

KEMH Library - Parent Education Information - <https://www.kemh.health.wa.gov.au/Pregnancy-and-Birth/During-yourpregnancy/Parent-Education>

Red Nose - <https://rednose.org.au/page/education-resources>

NGALA - <https://www.ngala.com.au/>

Triple P - Positive Parenting Program - <https://www.tripleparenting.net.au/au/freeparenting-courses/triple-p-online-for-baby/>

Meerilinga - <https://www.meerilinga.org.au/parenting-courses-services/>

Pregnancy, Birth and Baby Helpline: 1800 882 436

<https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Healthy-living/Parenting>

<https://ashleywinning.com/positive-mindset>

## Meal Services:

The Baby Days - <https://www.thebabydays.com.au/>

Mother Me - <https://www.mother-me.com.au/>

### Breastfeeding Support

Australian Breastfeeding Association - <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>

Perth based consultants  
<https://perthmumsgroup.com.au/breastfeeding-support-services-andibclcs-in-perth/>

### Instagram

psychedmommy

pandanational

cope.org.au

toyoufromsteph

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### **You Tube:**

Preparing for postpartum  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMLc7prFUYk>

10 Self Care Tips -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ybyo5nRmr1Y>

### **Podcasts:**

Australian Birth Stories  
The Great Birth Rebellion  
The Widwives Couldron  
Hello Postpartum  
Postpartum like a boss  
The After Birth Podcast  
Tales from the fourth trimester  
The Birth and Postpartum Diaries

### **Psychology and counselling:**

Fiona Rogerson – Perinatal and Trauma Counselling  
<https://fionarogerson.com.au/>



## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **Mother & Baby Units**

Raphael House SJOG  
1800 292 292  
[raphael.wa@sjog.org.au](mailto:raphael.wa@sjog.org.au)

KEMH Mother & Baby Unit  
Subiaco  
6458 1799  
[MBU@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:MBU@health.wa.gov.au)

### **Books:**

The first forty days - Heng Ou

The fourth trimester - Kimberly Ann Johnson

The postnatal depletion cure - Oscar Serrallach

Happy Mumma Postpartum Self Care - Robyn Weller

Why Postnatal recovery matters - Sophie Messenger

## **Contacts when things get tough**

PANDA -1300 726 306 [www.panda.org.au](http://www.panda.org.au)

COPE -1300 740 398 [cope.org.au](http://cope.org.au)

FOR WHEN -1300 242 322 [forwhenhelpline.org.au](http://forwhenhelpline.org.au)

Hold them tight, love them fiercely. Take in each day, as tomorrow will be a little different, and you will never get this time again.



I wish you a nurturing and supportive postpartum journey.  
Please reach out if you need any support or have any questions.

Email: [michelle@perthdoulaservices.com.au](mailto:michelle@perthdoulaservices.com.au)

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<https://www.instagram.com/perthdoulaservices/>

[www.perthdoulaservices.com.au](http://www.perthdoulaservices.com.au)

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