THE CARE PARTNER PROJECT

Preview Safe & Sound™ Checklists

Support Pregnancy, Labor and Recovery

Contact us for more information or to subscribe:
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YOUR LOGO

PREGNANCY CARE PARTNERS:

A mom-to-be and infant have the best chance for a healthy pregnancy and delivery when supported by an informed and engaged Care Partner.

As a potential Care Partner, look over all the "To-Do's" for supporting someone you care about through pregnancy, delivery, and recovery. Use these tips together!

RISKS TO PREGNANCY:

- *Heart disease.*
- *High blood pressure.*
- *Diabetes.*
- *Kidney disease.*
- *Use of recreational drugs.*
- *Smoking.*
- *Drinking alcoholic beverages.*
- *Underweight or overweight.*
- *Age 40+.*

HOW TO HELP

DURING PREGNANCY:

- ☐ **Read reliable sources about pregnancy** and what is happening in each trimester.
- ☐ **Discuss getting care** with a midwife or doula (with/without doctor).
- ☐ **Go to all appointments,** or as many as you can. Together, make up a list of questions to ask the doctor/midwife and take notes. (Create a notebook just for the pregnancy so all info will be in one place.)
- ☐ **Ask the doctor/midwife about:**
  - Vitamins and nutrition, especially folic acid (for the baby's brain development).
  - Urgent warning signs to watch for during pregnancy.
  - Pre-eclampsia and eclampsia: What are they? Warning signs?
  - The birth plan, along with any concerns and preparations for labor and delivery.
  - C-section rate.
  - Lamaze classes.
  - All anticipated costs, your insurance coverage and out-of-pocket expenses.
  - Monitoring blood pressure or oxygen saturation at home with a pulse oximeter or blood pressure cuff. (Available online or most major stores.)

- ☐ **Tour the hospital where the baby will be delivered** and ask for its C-section and infection rates. Look up its safety rating at Medicare.gov/care-compare and HospitalSafetyScore.org.

HELP YOUR LOVED ONE CONTACT A DOCTOR, GO TO AN EMERGENCY ROOM OR URGENT CARE CENTER FOR:

- Vaginal bleeding.
- Clear fluid leaking from vagina.
- Fast heartbeat.
- Redness or pain in leg that feels like a charley-horse that won't go away.
- Trouble breathing, shortness of breath.
- High blood pressure.
- Chest pain.
- Severe nausea or vomiting.
- Headache that won't go away, and is worsening.
- Cramping.
- Changes in vision.
- Inability to pee or fully relieve bladder.
- Puffiness or fluid build-up.

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PREGNANCY CARE PARTNERS:

Look over all the "To-Do's" for supporting someone you care about through delivery and recovery. Do you feel capable or have the time to participate? If not, no worries and no shame. Sometimes the best Care Partner is someone who can help their loved one find another!

RISKS & CONCERNS:

- *Failure to spot problems early and respond quickly.*
- *Hospital infections.*
- *Excessive bleeding (hemorrhage).*
- *Blood clots.*
- *Complications from health conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure.*
- *Complications due to age (40+, especially).*

HOW TO HELP YOUR LOVED ONE

THROUGH LABOR & DELIVERY:

Help prevent infections for mother, baby and yourself! Make sure you and everyone else who comes close to your loved one washes their hands first with warm, soapy water or a hand cleanser, such as Purell.®

- ☐ **Be prepared to stay in the hospital 24/7** until discharge day. Bring a notebook and pen—ideally the pregnancy notebook you started.
- ☐ **During labor, ask how you can help.** Time contractions? Get ice chips? Massage back? Make calls to friends and loved ones? Offer supportive words/encouragement to help minimize stress.
- ☐ **Get to know everyone involved on the medical team**—make note of their names and roles.
- ☐ **Make sure you have records of medications** your loved one normally takes and, if necessary, ask how/when they will be administered. Ask about other medications that may be needed and when they will be given—look them up on MedlinePlus. Use our handy notes form to help you know details to track!
- ☐ **Ask about risks of severe bleeding/hemorrhage** and prevention. *Ask: how do you monitor blood loss?*
- ☐ **Organize a support team of friends and family** to pitch in and help during the first weeks following birth. There are good apps to help you!
- ☐ **Watch the monitors** measuring heart rate and oxygen levels. No worries if you need help understand the readings—just ask the nurses. They'll be glad to have you as a second pair of eyes!

GET A NURSE IMMEDIATELY IF:

The mother or baby seem to be in distress or "going downhill," or if you see or your loved one tells you about:

- Vaginal bleeding, clotting blood.
- Fast heartbeat. (watch on the monitors).
- Redness or pain in leg that feels like a charley-horse that won't go away.
- Trouble breathing, shortness of breath.
- High blood pressure.
- Chest pain.
- Foul-smelling vaginal discharge.
- Mental confusion, unusual sluggishness, slurring words, fainting.
- Headache that won't go away, and is worsening.

If nurses are not responding to your concerns, you may call for a "Condition Help." Dial "O"/operator on the hospital land line and say: "I need a rapid response team in room #___."

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SUPPORT DURING RECOVERY AFTER CHILDBIRTH:

The first three months after childbirth are called the "4th Trimester" as a woman's body recovers from the physical and emotional stresses of pregnancy and delivery. Be on the lookout for any setbacks—physical, mental, or emotional—and help make sure your loved one gets immediate medical attention.

RISKS & CONCERNS:

- *Excessive bleeding.*
- *Infected stitches (if C-section or episiotomy performed).*
- *Hospital infection.*
- *Blood clots.*
- *Anxiety.*
- *Depression, ranging from "the blues" to suicidal thoughts.*

HOW TO HELP YOUR LOVED ONE

RECOVER AFTER CHILDBIRTH:

- ☐ **Continue all good hand-washing practices** to protect both mother and baby.
- ☐ **In the hospital, think ahead to recovery at home.** Ask about specific instructions for home care of both the mother and her newborn.
- ☐ **Ask about medications—**use our handy discharge Medication Record to take notes.
- ☐ **Be present for the discharge conversation** your loved one will have with a nurse just before going home. (Often, Care Partners leave to get the car, but that can wait!) Final instructions are critical and a good time to ask questions! Take notes or ask to record the conversation on your phone.
- ☐ **Make sure the discharge care plan includes:**
  - ○ List of warning signs, especially life-threatening complications, and how to respond.
  - ○ *Also, be sure to get contact info for doctors, hospital help line, and any other resources for immediate medical help.*
  - ○ Warning signs of excessive bleeding and blood clots.
  - ○ Signs of depression and anxiety.
  - ○ Lactation and breastfeeding support contact information.
  - ○ The time and date of first follow-up medical appointments for mother and baby.
- ☐ **Go to any follow-up doctor appointments,** prepared with a list of all questions the new mother and you may have.
- ☐ **Have candid conversations with your loved one** about their emotions and feelings. Ask, *"How are you really doing?"*

CONTACT A DOCTOR OR GO TO AN ER/URGENT CARE CENTER FOR:

- Vaginal bleeding.
- Trouble breathing, shortness of breath.
- Fast heartbeat.
- Redness/pain in leg; a charley-horse that won't go away.
- High blood pressure.
- Chest pain.
- Fever, chills, body aches.
- Redness, pain and swelling at stitch areas.
- Foul-smelling vaginal discharge.
- Severe nausea or vomiting.
- Headache that won't go away, and is worsening.
- Cramping.
- Changes in vision.
- Inability to pee or fully relieve bladder.
- Puffiness or fluid build-up.

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Nothing in life prepares your patients and their loved ones to manage a serious illness. Safe & Sound™ resources express your empathy and commitment to care that meets patients where they are.

Together, you are prepared to partner for patient-centered care.

Ready to partner for patients? Let's talk!

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