



Department of Psychiatry

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

Wellness Strategies for Moms with New Babies During COVID-19

The postpartum period can be challenging at any time. Having a new child in the midst of a public health emergency can take an added emotional toll, and it is even more important to prioritize self-care. Listed below are some strategies to support you and your baby's health and wellness during this unprecedented and difficult time.

Reduce your risk of exposure to COVID-19 as much as possible.

Practice social distancing. Clean your hands frequently using soap and water or alcohol-based hand-sanitizer. Clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces daily. Wear a mask or face covering when outside of your home. If you are an essential worker, speak to your manager about reasonable accommodations or precautions.

Set expectations around social distancing.

Not everyone interprets the guidelines around social distancing in the same way. It is important for you to collaborate with your healthcare team to determine what level of contact is comfortable to you as official guidelines change. Clarify boundaries around visitation and communicate them clearly to family and friends.

Utilize reputable sources for information regarding COVID-19 and the postpartum period.

Visit the websites for the [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecology \(ACOG\)](#) or [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) - Check the "People who need extra precaution" section.

Stay in touch with your ob/gyn and pediatric providers.

Ask them questions or for updates about latest guidelines around postpartum and infant care during COVID-19. Confirm if well-child or postpartum visits should be done via telehealth or in person, and ask which symptoms indicate that you should call providers right away.

Get help early if your infant is difficult to comfort or is struggling with feeding.

Find tips at www.healthychildren.org (see "crying and colic"). Talk to your pediatrician or contact an infant specialist via the Fussy Baby Network(R) Colorado Warmline at 877-6-CRY CARE.

Facing financial insecurity while postpartum?

You may be eligible for WIC services which includes healthy food access as well as other social services. See information at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/about-wic-wic-glance>



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Establish a daily routine.

A predictable routine is helpful to both moms and babies and can create a sense of stability in uncertain times. Evaluate and revise your daily routine as needed.

Dedicate time for self-care.

Try to find specific times to take care of you. Self-care activities could include a bath, listening to your favorite music, yoga, meditation, reading, games, coloring, exercise, planning an enjoyable activity and regularly connecting with supportive family and friends. Low and slow breaths throughout the day help with stress. Consider phone applications with breathing exercises and meditations at no or low cost. See: <https://www.mindful.org/free-mindfulness-resources-for-calm-during-covid-outbreak/> or <https://www.headspace.com/>

Take care of your physical health.

Have high protein and high fiber snacks easily accessible if possible and try to avoid excessive sugar and caffeine, which can negatively impact mood and sleep. Ask your partner or a support person to refill your water or bring you snacks if you are caring for your baby.

Practice healthy sleep behaviors.

Try to limit electronics close to bedtime which can delay sleep onset. Plan a sleep schedule with your partner, if you have one, to try to maximize rest for both of you. For example, alternate nights for feeding and waking with your baby.

Limit the amount and type of Covid-19 related media you are consuming.

Increased worries or negative mood may be signs it is time to reduce or change media exposure.

Connect with family and friends.

Connection to loved ones is especially important during social distancing and can be done safely via the phone, FaceTime, Zoom or Skype. Introduce them to your new baby. Share your feelings about caring for your baby during this public health crisis. It may also be helpful to talk to others about any sadness, anger, and grief you may feel about how this experience will be different than you had planned or hoped. Find time to laugh and share positive stories as well!

Consider joining a virtual group for postpartum women.

Connect with other women who are caring for a new baby during COVID 19 to help you feel less alone! Online groups are available through the University of Colorado Department of Psychiatry's Perinatal Mental Health Services at 303-724-1646 or email us at WBHW@cuanschutz.edu.

Make unique memories with your baby.

The changes related to COVID have required everyone to think and behave differently, and this may be a time to be creative and flexible. Document positive memories with your child daily through pictures and writing personal stories of your infant's first months in a journal. Consider organizing a virtual meet and greet for your new addition with family and friends.

Monitor your mood carefully.

Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders are common and treatable conditions. If you would like to discuss how you are feeling with a perinatal mental health specialist, please ask your Ob/Gyn clinician for referral information or call the University of Colorado Department of Psychiatry's Perinatal Mental Health Services at 303-724-1646 or email us at WBHW@cuanschutz.edu.



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