

For When

you need to care for yourself when your baby requires ongoing care in hospital



Sadly, not all births go to plan or your baby may be born with a medical issue. The very time you expected to be joyful in welcoming your little one into the world has been turned on its head.

You begin to learn medical words you didn't know existed. You may experience doctors, nurses and students discussing your baby's medical tests and results in front of you with a brief 'hello' and 'goodbye'. You may also be separated from your baby for a time.

This time can:

- Feel isolating, lonely and confusing
- Feel like it will never end or there are constant roadblocks/barriers
- Cause your mind to fixate on worst-case scenarios
- Give you more time to think about what's happening
- Overlook your own physical and mental health needs following birth

What can you do?

For When you're at hospital

At the hospital, it's ok to communicate your own needs as well as your baby's.

Some specific examples may be:

"Am I able to hold my baby before the next procedure today?"

"Can you please help me understand this better?"

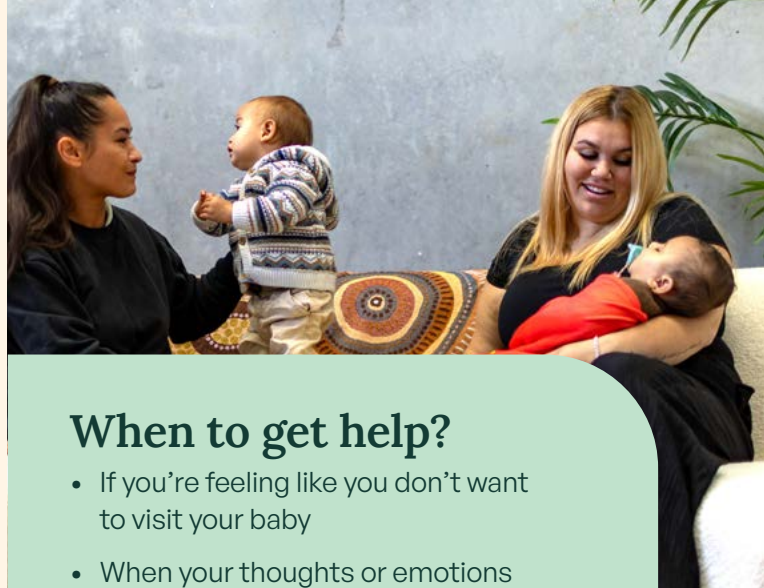
"Where can I get a hot meal for lunch?"

"Where can I park nearby that's free?"

- Plan your day with your baby's nurse, so you can take best care of yourself and also be there for important caregiving times
- Talk, read or sing to your baby while holding or touching them
- Ask if there are support groups for parents with a baby with similar issues as yours
- Ask to speak to the social worker for additional support
- Remember that you are a part of your baby's care team, you play an important role that includes comfort, safety and advocacy
- Do not feel afraid to ask for help or information, even if you have asked previously

For When you're at home

- Accept offers of help such as laundry, meal preparation and cleaning
- Allow yourself time to heal, you are still a postpartum mother that requires rest and healing
- Dads and/or non-birthing partners can play an important role in caring for their partner and their family's needs
- Consider using one centralised place where your loved ones can receive updates
- Do things you enjoy e.g. call a friend, go for a walk, engage in a hobby
- Prioritise nutrition, self-care and sleep



When to get help?

- If you're feeling like you don't want to visit your baby
- When your thoughts or emotions become hard to manage
- When you feel little joy throughout the day or that you are unable to cope
- When you feel disconnected or resentful towards your baby
- You have thoughts of wanting to hurt your baby, yourself or end your life

What help is available?

- Talk to trusted friends or family
- Talk to your nurse, hospital social worker or Aboriginal Health Worker
- Talk to your GP or other health professional

Contact ForWhen to help navigate you to the right mental health services and supports.

1300 24 23 22

Mon-Fri
9am - 4.30pm

@ForWhenHelpline



forwhenhelpline.org.au

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We acknowledge the Traditional and Continuing Owners of the land and waters of Australia, and we pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging. We pay tribute to the wisdom, richness, diversity and resilience of First Nations peoples and cultures.

